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EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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Thunderstorm

IT is getting darker. All the awnings on the big office building across the street are beginning to slap and rattle. At last there is a breeze blowing. Yes, there must be a storm coming, for the sky is dirty gray and the desultory musketry of the awnings goes on. We had been sitting here in the mental doldrums, longing for a bathing-suit, or better still a bathing-pool; thinking how much poundage we have exuded in the last two days. But it may pass, at that,—it may pass,—though we hear a distant, mumbling grumble that is surely thunder. Still, we can almost taste that rain already. It must come.

After a fashion this is an analogue of the mind benumbered with incessant reading. Words begin to weigh upon it as the darkness weighs on the senses through a hot, airless night. Not only words; writers' stereotyped impressions of life; so many situations carefully set up and prepared for, so much pawing of the emotions, so much long-drawn-out analysis of the perfectly obvious, so many stock characters mopping and mowing in one's brain. The intellect becomes sodden and sultry with it all. O for the detonation of true power, the lightning thrust of true intelligence. And—ah, at last,—there's the rain!

A slant, thin rain, at first,—and a flicker-flicker against the further windows. Not the drench, as yet, that we had hoped for, gushing, driving, cleansing, chrysmal. But it must come as surely as the incubus of the heavy atmosphere has oppressed us. And it will bring fresh colors and the clear air.

Under the burden of other men's thought, the murky canopy of congested imaginings of other minds, it is for something akin to a flashing, lashing silver torrent that editors and publishers, as well as readers, eternally wait. And when genius, begotten between the thunder and the lightning, suddenly freshets through the murk of contemporary pondering with its dazzling clearness and thirsty haste, how the colors of our scene quicken, how our hearts lift, how the air clears to crystal.

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For a long time and a long time contemporary thought has, perhaps, been building above us its gloomy thunderheads. There was a brooding, sullen quarrel in heaven among the gods. There was busyness in the clouds, in the murk, mixed mayhap with skyey portents. But there was nothing resolved, nothing shown, nothing clear. Now the flood of true imagination is sluiced upon us. When the language of genius visits earth in this fashion, we should bless it as we bless the rain.

But now, as we look from our window, no more rain falls. "No promise of relief" was in the papers this morning. Well, we had a little, even if a very little. And all through a year of books we have a little, if only a very little, now and then. We are grateful for so much. In fact we are very apt to say "What a refreshing flood that was!" but a flitting shower.

Yet if a great many of us feel that way, is it not a good sign? We may vastly overrate the refreshment we receive; but it shows how deeply we recognize our need for it. For subconsciously we are all aware of the strange benefice the language of genius can bestow; subconsciously we realize that our minds are choked and clogged, as it is, with words of little meaning.

What of that ancient lavish gift, however, of which our legends tell? Well, sometimes—as sometimes the floods fall—it is upon us like a desolation. We are not prepared for such a spate from on high. We quail and cower. We lock ourselves up in our houses and prowl in our darkness. We wished relief from the oppression of the heavens, true—but not, if you please, such a terrible thunderstorm. And when we emerge to a clearer light on our problems, we are very unlikely to place the credit where it is due. For civilized man is an essentially timorous animal.

Nevertheless the greatest fascination to those who inhabit the appanages of literature is this bright expectation of genius. But like the lightning we are now again awaiting, with its promise of the rain, we must remember that it never strikes twice in the same place. And it is never quite what we expected. In fact, we are extremely likely to glance up as we scurry to cover, and exclaim, "Why, but it is simply raining cats and dogs!" Yet thereafter—perhaps a long time thereafter, if we have been so stupid,—we shall know the air cleared, all life's true colors a little brighter; be aware of a Man's stature again, significant and inspiriting even against the cold, remote glitter of the stars.

North to South

By LOUIS UNTERMEYER

FORWARD magnolia buds that think
To shame my nothern reticence,
Posturing Judas-tree whose pink
In March is an impertinence,
You cannot rouse me anymore
With your inveterate civil war.

When you are done, no longer willing
To trust one jessamine to the cold,
My hardened maples will be drilling
Dark caverns for a deeper gold;
For every strident mocking-bird,
Ten quiet phoebes build unheard.

Flaunt your azaleas, preen your feathers,
There's something you can never mock
In one whose heart is not the weather's,
Whose flower is snow, whose heart is rock;
Whose faith, more green than growing green,
Is vivid with the thing unseen.

This Week

"The Plays of Sir James Barrie."
Reviewed by DESMOND MACCARTHY.

"Pierre, or The Ambiguities."
Reviewed by LEWIS MUMFORD.

"Salt Water Taffy."
Reviewed by DR. WALTER E. TRAPROCK.

"The Wave."
Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS.

"The Life of Charles Doughty."
Reviewed by EDWARD GARNETT.

"Adventure Calls."
Reviewed by KERMIT ROOSEVELT.

Truant Reading.
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

"The American Caravan."
Reviewed by LOLA RIDGE.

"Cotton Mather."
Reviewed by KENNETH B. MURDOCK.

Next Week, or Later

The Sagas and Ourselves.
By GARNET SMITH.

A Present-Day Dramatist*

By DESMOND MACCARTHY

EVERYONE is aware that Sir James Barrie possesses an extraordinary sense of the stage. That is to say, he knows to a hair's breadth the effect of a situation when it is apprehended by the eye as well as the ear, and of words when they are spoken with gesture. He understands the stage so well that he knows what liberties the dramatist can take with impunity, and how suggestible an audience is. There is legerdemain in all art, but it is far easier to watch the conjurer at his tricks in print than when you are actually listening to his patter. Shakespeare was aware of the latitude the stage allows, with the consequence that his work contains many passages, many barefaced devices for holding attention and intensifying emotion, which it has required the utmost ingenuity of commentators to interpret in a sense worthy of their conception of his intellect and the consistency of his characters. For instance, he will not scruple to make Hamlet speak of death as a bourne whence no traveller returns, though Hamlet has just been talking to his dead father; or to make a character utter some magnificently appropriate sentiment regardless of his being the kind of man he is. Of course, this must not be done too often, otherwise "character," upon which drama also depends, is lost, but the occasional sacrifice of character to immediate effect has been the mark of most dramatists who have had a strong sense of the stage. Ibsen is perhaps the most striking exception. The born dramatist thinks in scenes. If profound thought, if unforgettable and self-consistent human beings also emerge for us in the course of the play, the greater dramatist he; but his first care must be to see that the audience is feeling at each given moment, and his skill directed to achieving that end first.

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The above remarks are intended to lead up to a warning. Sir James Barrie's greatest strength lies in this sense of the scene—invisible, of course, to a reader; not in his thought or in character drawing, though that is often subtle and always clear. And although there are many passages in his plays which in print deliver up completely their content, there are many others which not only require acting to carry them off, but without it strike the reader as mere exposures of the manner in which the dramatist had proposed to move us. We watch him coldly at his tricks. Sir James has helped, it is true, our visual sense by frequent and admirable stage directions, and, thanks to these, the reader can certainly apprehend in part the effectiveness of, say, the opening scenes of "Dear Brutus" and of "Mary Rose." You see again, while reading "Mary Rose," the dark, dismantled drawing-room of a bereaved, uninhabited house, and the shivery old caretaker who starts at every creak of the dusty boards. The dialogue, too, between her and the Australian soldier is self-supporting. But the full effect of her *absence*, when she leaves to make him a cup of tea, of the other door which slowly opens and closes behind him, of the movements of the actor, which will suggest that some presence there in the dusk is making signs to him out of its own darkness or horror, must, of course, be before one to make their full effect. The fact that the optic nerve is inevitably starved in reading a play, makes, in the case of "Peter Pan," an even greater difference. Few readers, I think, would anticipate that its fantastic, charming whimsicalities and dangerously tender sentimentalities would "come

* THE PLAYS OF J. M. BARRIE. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1929. $5.

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off" in the marvelous degree to which they do upon the stage.

But Sir James Barrie has known exactly what he was about. His instinct for the stage has been so sure and subtle that he has enlarged its possibilities, gradually making room for his own peculiar imagination, one which before him would have been considered as "undramatic." If you read the plays in the volume here under review in the order in which they were written you find him first applying this sure sense of the stage to the staple kind of story, and of these long ones "The Admirable Crichton" is probably the best, though not up to "The Twelve Pound Look," which is a little masterpiece, and only later, as in "Dear Brutus" and "Mary Rose," applying it to strange themes. He has, however, by no means abandoned the earlier kind of subject. "Old Friends," for instance, is a poignant study in nemesis —drink overcome in a father cropping out again in his daughter. But neither "Old Friends" nor "The Will," nor "Half-an-Hour," which are extremely adroit examples of dramatic foreshortening, proving incidentally that the best way of writing a brief play is to choose a subject large enough to fill three or four acts, possess the qualities most orginal in him.

When "Dear Brutus" appeared the fastidious and discontented had been proclaiming for years that we must get away from realism, and that adherence to the facts of life was becoming boring on the stage. And behold! it was Sir James Barrie, the popular, airy, sentimental playwright, whom no one considered a pioneer, who was the first to produce such a play! And he was simply exercising his gift of original invention and his talent for interweaving recognizable sentiment and make-believe incidents.

* * *

It has been easy for critics to overlook Sir James Barrie's originality, partly because in other respects he is the least original of gifted writers. His criticism of life contains nothing new. No one ever got fresh light on ways and means, or on morals, or on human nature from him; only delightfully odd, slight, and sometimes surprisingly penetrating, confirmations of indulgent current judgments. No one ever came away from a Barrie play convinced he saw the Devil's horns sticking up in unexpected quarters, or that he had noticed for the first time the reflection of a star in a puddle.

Of course, he was far saner than many intellectual people in whose heads a few modern bees buzz in a vacuum of common sense. Yet the backgrounds which his arrangements in human nature—black and white and pink—demand, in order to justify them and set them off, is a strangely nebulous one. It seems to amount to a suggestion that life is a romantic, straightforward adventure, and that to be lived well it must be taken as such. Yet that view is not firmly enough apprehended to amount to a faith in him—as it did, say, in the case of Meredith or Stevenson. But it is not make-believe either. It is, in his case, something betwixt and between.

The characters to whom his heart goes out are those he conceives as holding it with a more wholehearted simplicity than he can himself encompass; consequently, he writes about such characters, at once very sentimentally and very penetratingly. This is the secret of his adoration of youth (for youth has often the air of taking life on trust as a romantic adventure), of his capacity for drawing young creatures, of his insight into them, and of the limitations of that delightful insight. It also accounts for his happy touch in drawing old people, in whom there is often not exactly a second childhood but a second innocence, and granted a certain easiness of circumstance and heart, a disposition to make of life in retrospect a pretty, simple picture. The sympathy of such old people for the young is a boundless tender admiration—provided that the young consent to being figures in that picture and remaining in it! Sir James Barrie's attitude towards youth in his writings strikes me as being a mixture between that of a grandfather and that of a young girl. Crossjay, in "The Egoist," is boyhood seen through Clara Middleton's eyes, and Crossjay is delightful. But those who have been boys themselves know that a good deal is left out of the picture; and not merely unaccommodating, harsh facts, but virtues inextricably connected with those facts; indeed, almost all the growing principle, the very sap by virtue of which the creature becomes at last a being "looking before and after." A boy is not only a right little, tight little fellow with nothing incongruous to him, but an adorable affection of premature manliness. But Sir James Barrie does not like growth. He likes people who do not grow up best, who remain—even at an advanced age—boys and girls, and in a static state of harmony with the world. Judging him then as an artist, he strikes me in general as beautifully unshockable, most wisely indulgent; but there is one thing I think would shock him artistically—a youth who did not take an enthusiastic, trusting attitude towards the world, who was savage, though not personally persecuted, sceptical, self-withdrawn, world-questioning, disillusioned. There is no sympathy in his work with that pimpled and sullen spiritual gawkiness which, it seems to me, youth's true lover must also possess. Youth is essentially the thinking time. It is an enjoying time, too; but compare the process of thinking in later life with the really anxious, sensitive, bebothered search for explanations and sympathy characteristic of early years. Why afterwards thinking becomes, in comparison, a mere accomplishment, and friendship an art, only needing a little care and patience like boiling an egg. It is no longer a crucial, personal experiment. Sir James Barrie deals as a dramatist with that aspect of youth which is most delightful to those of advanced years. What I miss in his drama, and much of it deals with youth, is interest in the questing, crude, spring-like temper of growing beings, which if it has some beauty has also the drizzling, uncomfortable rawness of actual springtime. His is a world in which the most jarring note of all would be the one which hums through nearly everybody's twenties—the pathetic, unsolvable conflict between the young and old generation. He stops his ears to that—and the public love him for it. He is very fond, on the other hand, of depicting shyness between young and old, the undemonstrativeness which is itself a demonstration, the reserve which is (almost painfully) unreserved. *Vide* the scene between father and son in "The New World," and between a father and his son's ghost in "A Well-Remembered Voice." Like all writers to whom tenderness and affection are very moving and beautiful (Dickens, for example), sentimentality as an artist is his greatest danger; and he is never more sentimental than when he is depicting those who are concealing what they feel. He is so anxious that they beautifully betray themselves that he overdoes it, and a scene, the point of which is its delicacy, tips over into one of spiritual indelicacy. Of course, a playwright is in such cases at the mercy of his interpreters. Remembering the love scene in "Mary Rose," I was astonished to find on reading it how inadequate its interpretation had been.

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Coleridge, generalizing partly from introspection, once declared that every man of genius was half a woman. The generalization does not hold good: Coleridge himself remarked at another time that Wordsworth was "all man." Nevertheless, in creatively imaginative men a strong streak of femininity is often noticeable. In the author of these plays, for instance, it is most marked. It may be said that in his imagination woman, leprechaun, and boy meet together, and that the masculine element is almost entirely absent. His femininity enables him to draw women with a simple subtlety most remarkable, and with what may be called (if a bull is allowed) a peculiar kind of merciless sympathy. And it is also nowhere more noticeable than in the ambiguity of the dramatist's attitude towards life of which I spoke above; in the desire to have things somehow both ways—to respond to life as though it justified the most romantic trust, and yet the next moment to see any part of it with a disillusioned matter-of-factness, the reports of which insight are never, however, permitted to modify the fundamentally comforting interpretation; to reach the consolation of the mystic, not through faith or intuition but through sentiment; to believe that somehow or other there is deep wisdom in pretending.

Sir James Barrie's subjects are often at bottom grim, but the effect of his treatment is to make them very much the reverse. There is a curious contradiction often between the substance of his plays and the manner in which it is presented. He is a baffling subject for criticism, partly for this reason. The public always think that he is presenting them with sugar and spice and all that's nice; the critical public, indeed, find the flavor of it frequently too sugary, yet the analyst discovers that the actual ingredients used are often bitter. Not is it merely a case of powder in jam; the powder is made to taste like jam. Sometimes this transposition of flavors is more than a critic can stand; sometimes, as in passages of "Dear Brutus" and of "Mary Rose," for example, it strikes him as a delicate miracle.

Because Sir James Barrie has so tender a touch he can portray facts which would wound if he were not. His audiences will take from him what they would not take without wincing from another. One dominant emotional note in this play is, after all, that struck by the recognition of the fact of human forgetfulness.

> There are no fields of amaranth this side of the grave, there are no voices that are not soon mute, there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated, of which the echo is not faint at last.

Is not Mary Rose's return to life as dismaying as death itself? We grow old, too; the heart becomes like an old bird's nest filled with snow, and the mind trivial.

And yet how ambiguous "Mary Rose" is! Is it fairyland or Heaven into which the tired ghost is finally received? Both. You can take the play as fantasy; you can take it seriously. The infection which the play communicates is the desire to take fairyland religiously and religion wistfully as though it were a fairy story. This is an attitude sympathetic to many today. The dramatist is never more deft than when he is playing thus with the iridescence of that emotional ambiguity. The closing passage in the preface to "Peter Pan," in which he is speaking out of himself, also discloses that ambiguity. He tells us that he watched sadly the five boys who had inspired the legend outgrowing their faith in it. Once at this period in their lives he was with them at a famous wishing place. With difficulty he persuaded one of them to wish. He did so contemptuously, wishing that his favorite ghilly should appear on the landing-stage, whom the boy himself believed to be far away. And behold he was there!

> I know no one less like a fairy than Johnny Mackay, but for two minutes No. 4 was quivering in another world than ours. When he came to he gave a smile which meant that we understood each other, and thereafter neglected me for a month, being always with Johnny. As I have said, this episode is not in the play; so though I dedicate "Peter Pan" to you I keep the smile, with the few other broken fragments of immortality that have come my way.

What was the significance of that smile? I interpret with diffidence: I conceive it to have meant to him who received it, first the recognition on the boy's part of the love which had divined what was most desired at the moment and provided it. But also it may have been precious as suggesting that a symbolic hint had been taken: that though this is not a magic world, and far from being one in which what is longed for is miraculously given, fairy stories are not altogether nonsense, for there may be a Love which provides.

Eighteenth-century critics used to praise authors for their "invention"; we talk chiefly about "creative" power—a different thing. Sir James Barrie has the most surprising and easy "invention." At every turn he can supply some ingenious, entertaining incident to carry on his stories. This faculty works so spontaneously that it gives an air of extreme lightness to his best plays. He seems sometimes to have made a play out of nothing, which is due to the machinery of narration being so supple that he has time to be apparently inconsequent by the way. Compare him with others who attempt the fantastic: how stodgy and over-solemn they appear when they introduce the playful supernatural!

Mrs. Kate Perugini, the only surviving daughter of Charles Dickens, who died in London the other day in her ninetieth year, inherited many of her father's gifts. "She was a witty conversationalist, wrote as well as she talked (says *John O'London's Weekly*), although she published only a few articles and poems, drew and painted with distinction, and had hosts of friends. She was christened Katherine Elizabeth Macready—the third name being in honor of her godfather, the famous actor—but her father, with his fondness for nicknames, used to call her 'Lucifer Box' because he said she had a 'lurking propensity to fieryness.' When she was about ten, Forster tells us in his Life, she and her elder sister Mary 'had taken much pains to teach their father the polka, that he might dance it with them at their brother's birthday festivity . . . and in the middle of the previous night, as he lay in bed, the fear had fallen on him suddenly that the step was forgotten, and then and there, in that wintry, dark, cold night he got out of bed to practice it."

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Catnip and Amaranth

PIERRE, OR THE AMBIGUITIES. By HERMAN MELVILLE. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1929. $2.50.

Reviewed by LEWIS MUMFORD
Author of "Herman Melville"

"PIERRE" is the last important work of Herman Melville to be made available to the general reader. For the sake of all that is valid in "Pierre," one trusts that no new reader of Melville will approach this novel until he has read "Moby-Dick" and "White-Jacket" or "Typee." For "Pierre" is a volcanic fragment of Melville's personality, an uncontrolled eruption, splendid and spectacular at one moment, but obscure and sulphurous and ashen at another. It is without doubt his most ambiguous achievement—so good that it cannot be neglected, and so verbose, high-flown, hectic, weakly theatrical, that one is at loss to pick out a romantic work, from Byron onward, that can rival it in loud ineptitude.

The first person to see any literary merit in "Pierre" was, I think, Mr. Arthur Johnson. In 1921 he published an essay on Herman Melville as a stylist in which he made an ingenious comparison of the prose in parts of "Pierre" with the later manner of Henry James, and suggested, with some show of plausibility, that James might have read "Pierre" as a youth and been unconsciously influenced by it. Later, Professor Percy Boynton discovered a number of prose poems in "Pierre," and arranged them as free verse. "Pierre" is, indeed, a book of fragments, and the fragments are worth mining and extracting. In his very wise preface to the present edition, Mr. H. M. Tomlinson says: "I have quoted from it a displeasing example of English. But if you want to be sure that Melville must take his place with the masters, then turn in this book to the passages he calls Enceladus, and to the discourse by Plotinus Plinlimmon on Chronometricals." For the sake of such passages, and many minor ones on the way, and for the sake of the intention that broods over the whole book, "Pierre" deserves to be read.

* * *

What was that intention? Of what platonic idea is "Pierre" the blurred and distorted counterpart?

"Pierre" is a complicated symbol of Herman Melville's dilemmas as a man and his explorations as an imaginative writer and a philosophic thinker. Much of the materials of "Pierre" are plainly autobiographical: the hero's patrician background, his relation to his father and mother, the effect of his father's image, his attachment to his cousin, his career as a writer: the novel, in fact, is full of identifiable landscapes and people, and, according to Dr. Henry Murray, Jr., whose researches into the actualities of Melville's life have gone farther than either Mr. Weaver's or my own, there is even a certain amount of evidence which might link the dark, mysterious Isabel, half-sister to Pierre, with the real sister who during the early part of his literary career had so patiently made fair copies of his manuscripts.

Melville pictures Pierre's disenchantment with the conventional world of his youth, his revolt against his mother's worldliness, and his chivalrous protection of his half-sister under the form of marriage. With the insight and medical directness of Freud, Melville discloses the ambiguity of Pierre's sexual relations; there is courtship and flirtation in Pierre's relations with his mother, and in his espousal of Isabel he is driven by an unconscious physical passion—in both cases a disguised incest-relation. When Pierre becomes aware of the ultimate bearings of his "pure" and "noble" conduct, when he acknowledges to himself that a crippled or ugly half-sister would not have wrenched him so easily from his plighted love to Lucy, he is horrified; and Melville himself participated in that feeling. His mental health was shattered when he finished "Pierre"; in the book the hero and all who are involved in his career either die of shock or are murdered. The story is plainly autobiographical even in its fantastic melodramatic conclusion. So much for its sources.

These facts, however, are not themselves free from ambiguities: if they are facts in one relation, they may in turn serve as symbols in another: for the incest, the sterility, the black despair of the fable point to the impasse Melville had reached as a writer and thinker. The chief importance of "Pierre" for us today lies not in the adolescent revolt of the hero, a revolt which discloses chiefly Melville's failure to achieve complete sexual maturity, but in the insight into certain ultimate truths that had come forth as by-products of his personal dilemma. If the autobiographical parts show Melville at his weakest, a poet in the fashion of Thomas Moore, a romantic like Byron, a hopeless adolescent like Werther, there are other sections that reveal to us the great mind that conceived "Moby-Dick," and that now turned back into the ego with the same heedless audacity that it had attacked man's external relation to the universe.

The principal moral of "Pierre," perhaps, is the relativity of Vice and Virtue, and, what is even more vexing to one who wants plain signposts and hard-and-fast directions, their strangely interchangeable rôles. Melville had grown up in the hard Protestant conviction that Good and Bad, Right and Wrong, Virtue and Vice had separately embodied existences: each had an intrinsic character, each was readily identifiable. Was not he himself a "good" man: did he not honorably cleave to his wife, strive to gain a livelihood for his family, fulfil all his

SIR JAMES BARRIE
A caricature by Low.
From "Lions and Lambs." (Harcourt, Brace.)

duties as a son and a citizen? On the surface, yes: but when he peered below the surface, honestly, remorselessly, holding back nothing and unconcerned about his reputation, he was amazed at his discoveries. Was not all that was valid in his career a defiance of "virtue"? His experiences had come as a vagabond and a deserter; his happiest love affair had not been sanctioned by church or state; his deepest book was one that he had broiled in hellfire and baptized in the name of the Devil. Vice and virtue were indeed the supreme ambiguities. No honest man could pretend to be a virtuous one. What passed for goodness and righteousness was a convention, like eating with a knife and fork. The convention was useful to society, but in the recesses of his soul Melville realized that Vice and Virtue could not be parcelled out in this fictitious manner. Virtuous courses might lead to ruin, and the "virtuous" man might be driven to madness and suicide. The signposts were down: the identities of Virtue and Vice were dissolved: Virtue was the full and unimpeded flow of life, and Vice was the opposite, and at any moment, if one watched carefully, one quality might turn suddenly into the other.

But what, Melville seems to ask himself in "Pierre," what if thought itself is just as dubious in isolation as virtue: may not the loftiest courses be more baneful than men suppose? He began to suspect this, I think, while making his furthest exploration in "Moby-Dick": perhaps the highest, the least human and earthly truth, was mere destruction and nothingness. The white amaranth that grew in the upland pastures was the symbol of the intellectual life: so pure, so austerely beautiful, but so sterile: it ruined the pastures and gave no sustenance to any beast. In contrast, consider the catnip; it was a domesticated plant and it clung even to the ruins of old houses, testifying to life, family, habitations, institutions. "Every autumn the catnip died, but never an autumn made the amaranth to wane. The catnip and the amaranth—man's earthly household peace, and the ever-encroaching appetite for God."

The appetite for God might usurp the place that should be open to other appetites, and in becoming a philosopher or seer one might become something less than a man. Thought that displaced all other form of experience was sterile, as blackly ineffectual as those incestuous wishes that spoiled one's married love. Was not Melville's own mind, particularly his unconscious, his dark half-sister Isabel? That was the final ambiguity. He who quitted the earth, assaulted the sky, sought the ultimate truth, uncontaminated by the local and accidental and personal might, instead of disclosing a more precious realm, discover a wall of blackness. The last reach of thought was emptiness; the final word of literature, silence. Was this profundity—having nothing to say? Mathematically, it was the equivalent of asserting that infinity equals zero. If that be the ultimate destination of thought, wisdom might urge that one tarry at the half-way stations.

"Pierre" suggests, in more than one pregnant passage, the ultimate reaches of Melville's thinking. Mr. Tomlinson does not exaggerate when he says: "This book is bottomless. It is out of soundings. A reader is poised over an abyss of darkness most of the time, to the ultimate depth of which no sounding by man will ever be made." That is true of its core; and in a sense, Melville penetrated in "Pierre" farther than he himself was aware: the book perhaps means more to us, in the light of what modern science has taught us of physics and psychology, than it did to its own author: his hints and dim intuitions come to us now clarified by appropriate concepts. One may view with tolerance the patent, the almost laughable defects in "Pierre." The wreckage of a great mind has more valuable treasures than the tidy bulk of a small one. If in "Pierre" Melville often seems one of the last and weakest of the Romantics, he is also one of the first, and surely one of the most profound, of the moderns.

Salt in Her Veins

SALT WATER TAFFY. As Told to COREY FORD by JUNE TRIPLETT. New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons. 1929.

Reviewed by DR. WALTER E. TRAPROCK, F.R.S.S.E.U.

IT was on the cards that June Triplett, the daughter of my old navigator, Ezra Triplett, should do just what she has done, namely knock the world for a cockeyed loop with her amazing recital of sea wanderings. She has salt in her veins, that child, and not a little of it has seeped into the pages dictated to her amanuensis, Corey Ford. Naturally, since the publication of this sprightly log I have heard the usual doubts expressed as to its veracity. It is ever so. Let a person do anything out of the ordinary and whimpering stay-at-homes, swivel-chair critics, and tea-table travellers at once raise yowls of doubt. I have had the same experience in reference to some of my own reports of doings in odd and unusual corners of the globe. I can only urge little June to be of stout heart and to treat her critics with the scorn they deserve. Truth will prevail in the end.

How could June Triplett lie, sired as she was, and is, by a man like Ezra, the soul of honesty and acme of accuracy! And Junie is the very spit of her father. Argument aside, I personally know most of the incidents in the book to have been as stated . . . or very near it. Let me mention a few specific items. In the first chapter little Junikins refers to her father's way with a whale, which he tackles by the dorsal fin. I can add with emphasis that this is less . . . not more . . . than the truth. Dorsal or pectoral, all fins look alike to Ezra and, when thoroughly irritated by a whale, I have seen him grab one fin in each of his hairy paws and kick the defenseless mammal to death. And yet what kindness, what gentleness lay in the heart of the man.

June tells us that "when he had shattered the jawbone of a sailor with a single blow of his fist, he would always stoop down and lift the fallen offender gently to his feet before he hit him again." I remember this trait well. He did it to me once . . . but only once. No match for him in physical strength, I was his master in strategy. When we set sail on the first voyage undertaken by Traprock Expeditions, Inc., I saw at once that Ezra and I must come to

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grips, not once but often. It was the old story of Ulysses against Hercules, brain against brawn, me against Ezra. After having felt the might of his fist I gave this a wide berth, but a few days later, slipping silently up behind him in my stocking feet, I cracked him with a marlin spike and he went down like the bridge of St. Louis, Mo.

A week later, as we were leaving Wangawanga, the largest (and loudest) of the Audible Islands, I scooped up a hatful of red ants, which I put in Ezra's berth. It was not long before he actually cringed in my presence and it took me some time to restore his shattered morale. But I digress. . . .

I note certain inaccuracies in June's use of sea terms, which is understandable in a lassie of her tender years. She refers frequently to the ship's rafflefrees when obviously she means whiffletrees. She quotes Ezra as giving the command to "reef the shrouds" when any sea-wise writer would know the correct expression is to "warp" or, at times, "fold the shrouds." Triplett, by the way, was enormously ingenious in the construction of labor saving devices aboard ship. It annoyed him to see so much time taken and labor expended in shortening or lengthening sail. On the second cruise of the Kawa, when we took her overland through Ukrainia, both our main and mizzen masts were hinged closed to the deck level. By merely pressing a button, Triplett could make all the sails lie down. I saluted Prince Olaf of Finland in this way and was decorated for it.

To my mind the high spot of June's narrative . . . and it is all pretty much above sea level . . . is her description of her father's repulse of the attacking waterspouts. How exactly like Triplett to rise to the occasion and send a bullet through the abdomen of the herd leader. June's own words can not be bettered.

> *Crack!* With uncanny aim Father sent a single bullet through the middle of the enemy!
>
> For a moment the waterspout halted dead in its tracks, swaying backward; then slowly it tilted forward, and collapsed with a horrible roar. Hundreds of tons of water, fish, seaweed, and a couple of tourists from a nearby steamer descended on our decks. . . The rest of the herd had halted, evidently nonplussed by this sudden accident to their leader. Now they turned, panic-stricken at the white-man's magic, and scattered pell-mell toward the horizon, their tails between their legs.

As sea literature, this is all wet, as June would say.

One chapter in the book is woefully inaccurate and that is Chapter Seven which describes the sinking of the Kawa. I categorically deny that this or anything like it ever happened, and I should know, for the Kawa lies even now at the bight of the Gowanus Canal loading a cargo of scurvy for the lesser Antilles. Yet I am far from implying that June wished to misrepresent the facts. One who cons her log closely will note that she is very inaccurate in regard to proper names. With improper names she is adept, but her names of ships are hopelessly confused. Obviously what she says happened to the Kawa really happened to another ship, probably the old left-handed ketch, Cora, a crazy craft which I well remember was subject to just such sinking spells as June describes.

June makes one other slip which I may as well correct while I am about it. In Chapter Eight she tells of visiting the Virgin Islands where my old buddy, Herman Swank, was king. This is wrong. I was king and Herman was Prime Minister and about the primest I have ever had. But after all, why cavil at a few inaccuracies when the volume as a whole fairly reeks with truth. And with what swing and verve young Ford has caught the spirit of the narrator and the tang of spume and scud. There are passages that have all the dizzy surge and swash of a washing machine and I found that I could only read a little at a time until I finally got my sea legs on. It is a sterling performance and I am proud of the little daughter of my old skipper, the little girl whom I personally taught the art of navigation and, the uses of sextant, quadrant, and hydrant. Proud, too, am I to be incorporated in another epic of the sea and to know that old Traprock, thanks to fifty years of clean living, is still able to take care of his share of "Salt Water Taffy."

Sir Hall Caine, who recently celebrated his seventy-sixth birthday, says that when he is well enough he works at a book which has been on his hands for many years. He is keeping its subject a secret.

Cape-Smith's First Book

THE WAVE. By EVELYN SCOTT. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. 1929. $2.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

FOR a few minutes Miss Scott's book puzzles the reader. It is obviously a piece of Civil War fiction; but the opening sketch of a Charleston lad who witnesses the bombardment of Fort Sumter from a rowboat is suddenly broken off for another brief sketch of a Baltimore clerk who participates in the attack on the Sixth Massachusetts, and this in turn is followed by a sharply-drawn picture of a Virginia family where the father is an ardent Confederate while the mother is a Yankee with brothers in the Union army. Then the reader catches the clue in Miss Scott's quotation at the beginning of the book from Philip Lake's "Physical Geography:"

> The water of the ocean is never still. It is blown into waves by the wind, it rises and falls with the tides. The waves travel in a definite direction, but a cork thrown into the water does not travel with the wave.

The Civil War was like an immense wave which runs through millions of drops of water; it caught up, churned, exalted, crushed, and transformed millions of human beings, shook them into new positions and gave them new shapes, and passed on. Miss Scott traces the wave, in more than six hundred pages, from Fort Sumter to Lincoln's emancipation, registering its passage in typical impulses of agony and joy, bewilderment and comprehension, courage and fear, as given to perhaps two hundred Americans, North and South, soldier and civilian, black and white. Sketch follows sketch, episode follows episode; not one is related to another save as all are related to the overmastering wave called the Civil War.

It was an ambitious design which Miss Scott formed, and it is ambitiously executed. The Civil War, she implies, was too tremendous and profoundly significant to be apprehended through any of the older forms of art within one's grasp; an epic might serve, or another "War and Peace" might be adequate, but what writer can wield Jove's thunderbolts? The best way to describe it, she says in effect, is by inventing a new form. She will show its impact upon scores of highly diverse persons—soldiers, old maids, children, clerks, farmers, generals, Lincoln, one of Morgan's cavalry, a newspaper correspondent at Gettysburg, a sailor on the sinking *Alabama;* placing each of these individuals beneath her lens at a moment of crisis, and wringing the utmost psychological significance from the episode. By the combined effect of these scores of little personal dramas, she believes, we will gain some genuine realization of the total effect of the war. Her method involves many complete and sudden contrasts, harsh wrenchings of the attention, and sharp transitions in time, place, and mood; it requires that the reader must accept a disjointed, inchoate effect. It means that the reader no less than the writer must make an unusual effort in order to grapple sympathetically with such wide varieties of experience and personality. But if successful, it also means that much of that bewildering welter of events and emotions which made up the human side of the war will be caught for the printed page.

❧ ❧ ❧

It must be said that an extraordinary talent has gone into Miss Scott's book. The kaleidoscopic succession of descriptions, incidents, stories, bits of drama—only with none of that continuity which the kaleidoscope possesses—required a remarkably agile and versatile imagination. It demanded something more. Miss Scott projects herself into the personalities of her wide array of characters with an intensity that is usually striking and sometimes amazing—though of course intensity is much easier in a brief episode than in a long narrative. She makes us really feel the emotions of the genteel but starving spinster who joins a food riot in hunger-racked Richmond and who horrifies herself by clutching a loaf of bread from a sacked bakery; the wonder of the old darkey whose eye is suddenly riveted, outside Petersburg, by the explosion of the mine which opened up the battle of the Crater; the excitement and terror of the youth who sank with the *Itasca* as Farragut's fleet fought its way into the mouth of the Mississippi. The book is packed with incident, yet its texture is subjective rather than objective; it is always the minds of the characters, rather than their acts, which interest the writer. Obviously great economy was imperative, and it is notable how quickly Miss Scott transfers us to a definite place and situation—that, for example, of a wounded soldier in the Wilderness:

> At first, the heat was no more than is blown out by an oven, warming the face. Then it began to penetrate the clothing most uncomfortably. Mingled with the ache in his slightly wounded leg, Bob felt the scorched sensation which made retreat involuntary. In the glassy wall of the flames he could see men running. Then, like creatures imprisoned in some ruddy amber, they were trying vainly to get out. He could see them wriggling on charred stumps of ankles, waving shrivelled arms at him. Their blistered faces seemed to melt, and their twisted mouths were mobile scars, uttering soundless words of agony. Fortunately for Bob's self-control, the rushing, crackling noises of the fire consumed, as in a great wind, all these other noises. He clung to the colors, and still, when he was abandoned, would not let them go. They seemed to him, in a vague way, to supply his sanity . . . When a shout for assistance did finally reach him, through the *blat-blat* of the fire, beating like flapping blankets, he hurried on to offer succour relievedly.

Sometimes Miss Scott even achieves an excellent short story; that, for example, of the border raider who holds up a Union train, is taken, and finally escapes from his captors. The episodes are naturally of uneven merit, and when she essays the very highest flights, she fails. She gives us inadequate sketches of Grant and Lee, and her study of Lincoln as he sat in the box at Ford's Theatre before the fatal pistol-shot lacks truth as lamentably as it lacks dignity and power. Though her style for the most part is quiet and simple, sometimes she overwrites. Yet most of the book is kept at a high level; it was well worth writing, and it is well worth reading.

Partly because of its novelty of form, it is one of the most interesting of all the efforts to deal with the Civil War in fiction. But many readers, while granting its power, will lay it down with the feeling that it embodies an artistic fallacy. A fluttering chaos of a hundred episodes and incidents, a rapid flickering of unrelated pictures on the screen, may achieve an arresting effect—but not the higher kind of effect. There is something fundamentally faulty in an art which arouses our interest in a character or scene for a brief moment, and then hurries to another and another. A great organic novel, where the characters are studied through a sustained action and where the interrelation of persons and events leads to a genuine development of individuality, demands an altogether larger and finer kind of talent; and it offers a truer, more penetrating medium for the study of a historical period. In such a book the whole can be far greater than the sum of its parts; here the whole is less than the sum of the parts, for the parts too often merely duplicate one another. They are all surface facets, and the inner truth of the matter—what the Civil War meant to its participants—is left largely unrevealed. Mary Johnston's "The Long Roll" and "Cease Firing" are not great novels; Stephen Crane's "The Red Badge of Courage" and Harold Frederic's "The Copperhead" are both brief studies, limited in scope. But they are better as art than this book, and when one searches for essentials, they give a deeper idea of the war. We do not know a character until we follow him through several scenes and events, not merely one, and till we see him in important relationships with other characters; we cannot understand the human impacts of a war until, abandoning mere panorama and episode, we study these impacts through characters thus fully realized.

During the recent Hungarian "book-week," which was held in connection with the Budapest International Fair, tents were set up in the main streets, and authors and poets sold their own works to the public, while their photographs were given free.

The Saturday Review
of LITERATURE

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Doughty of Arabia

THE LIFE OF CHARLES M. DOUGHTY. By D. G. HOGARTH. New York: Oxford University Press. 1929.

Reviewed by EDWARD GARNETT

CHARLES M. DOUGHTY is happy in his biographer. After Professor Barker Fairley's valuable critical study of Doughty's prose and poetry comes this "Life," by the late Dr. Hogarth, which garners and preserves all that is or will be known of its subject. Nobody but Dr. Hogarth, our leading scholar of Arabic, could have constructed a record so comprehensive in detail, so finely alert, and so penetrating in its justice. The biographer's difficulties were many. Doughty, the most reticent of men, refused to supply his devoted admirers with any but the most meagre outline of his life. For many years of his early manhood only the barest skeleton of his doings exists, and thus the story of his first thirty-three years, up to the day in November, 1876, when he set forth, disguised as a simple Syrian, to overtake the Haj and enter Arabia, fills only thirty-six pages.

The son of aristocratic country gentry, his mother being a Hotham, a family which has produced "prelates, courtiers, warriors, ambassadors, admirals, and judges," Doughty was educated at Cambridge, where he studied particularly natural science and geology. At the age of twenty-one he had projected as his patriotic life work the writing of a great epic, a work "in the tradition of noble Chaucer and beloved Spenser," for which he was to fit himself by long preliminary studies. He detested Victorian English and deplored "the decadence of the English language," and his passion to "continue the older tradition of Chaucer and Spenser" led to his life being, so to say, an unending duel with the Victorians' literary practice. After reading for many months at Oxford, Doughty left England in 1870 to study history and languages abroad, and first stayed in Holland, passing thence to Belgium, Italy, Algiers, Spain, Greece, Palestine, Egypt, and Sinai. At Petra he heard from a peasant of the wonderful carved rocks of Medain Salih, and in September, 1875, he returned to Vienna and petitioned in vain the Royal Geographical Society and the British Association for pecuniary aid to explore Edom and Moab. After waiting ten months in Damascus, studying colloquial Arabic and training for the hardships of his journey, he slipped at length into Arabia, with the scantiest equipment and only a few gold pieces in his purse.

Sixty pages are devoted by Dr. Hogarth to a résumé and critical examination of the two years journeyings that followed, and two short chapters to Doughty's long frustrated attempts to secure recognition from the learned world and some pecuniary recompense for his Arabian discoveries, after his return to England, broken in health. It is the most curious story of the disappointments and disillusionments awaiting an irascible man of genius who was certainly difficult to handle. No modern man of the first rank perhaps ever received more official snubs than did Doughty. The German and French scholars, and especially the Swiss Professor of Arabic, Alois Sprenger, were alive to the value of Doughty's explorations, but the British authorities viewed them with cold indifference, the British Museum and the British Association declining his offers, and the Royal Geographical Society manifesting "no enthusiasm" when Doughty read a paper on his discoveries. And four years later, in 1884, when Doughty approached the leading publishers with the MS. of "Arabia Deserta," he was rebuffed everywhere, one firm refusing to publish the book even on commission, a second saying it was too long and obscure, and a third refusing publication on any terms whatever, writing that "the manuscript ought to be taken in hand, recast, and practically rewritten by a practised literary hand." Professor William Wright and Professor Robertson Smith of the Cambridge Press, however, came to the rescue, and after fresh delays and debates, the great book was issued at a cost of £750, nominally at Doughty's expense, the Cambridge Press losing eventually £400 by the venture.

The book had on the whole "a good press," the *Times* and the *Spectator* especially being enthusiastic, but "few reviewers found much beyond reprehensible affectation in its literary style." Although the reviewers in chorus "admired this record of courage and endurance and congratulated the explorer on an extraordinary achievement," Blunt and the youthful Robert Bridges, William Morris, and Burne Jones appear to have been the only men of note who acclaimed "Arabia Deserta," and the last two Doughty never met. The book had taken nine years of intense labor to write and Doughty now washed his hands of Arabia and turned to "what I considered my true life's work with the Muse," viz: the epic, "The Dawn in Britain," which cost him nine more years' labor, working nine hours a day, following five years of preliminary studies. In the summer of 1905, Doughty, says his biographer, receiving no encouragement from the Cambridge Press, "began again the weary round of the publishing houses."

> No publisher would look at twenty-four cantos and over thirty thousand unrhymed decasyllabic lines, and an ever-growing likelihood that not only the fruit of so many years would not mature, but also that this message to his nation would be unheard, threw him into a mood of deep despondency. And indeed it is possible, even probable, that the epic would have remained a manuscript to this day, but for the unexpected help of an individual till then unknown to its author. This was Mr. Edward Garnett . . . .

I will not repeat here the short account which I wrote at Dr. Hogarth's request, of how Doughty and I met in the summer of 1905 at Messrs. Duckworth's publishing office, of how that publisher, on my report, pluckily undertook to issue the epic, and of how the abridgment which I prepared of "Arabia Deserta," two years later, brought the knowledge of that great masterpiece to literary men and to the public generally. Twenty years had passed since the Victorian professors, the Oxford and Cambridge dons, the publishers' readers, and the literary men had united in their condemnation of the magnificent style of "Arabia Deserta" and in requiring that the book should be "recast and rewritten." And in 1908, it only needed a critic's enthusiasm and a strong lead in a Preface, for the tide to turn and roll the other way. Current Victorian "costermongering" no longer went hand in hand with academic rigidity. And "Wanderings in Arabia" was a halfway house, far easier to enter and possess than the great book in its entirety. In making that abridgment a sort of desperate courage nerved me both to begin and finish it. And today nobody professes to find any difficulty in reading the great travel book from beginning to end.

* * *

The moral is plain. Genius, an innovating force, always encounters the hostility of contemporary conservatism. When I met Wilfrid Scawen Blunt in 1908 and he spoke contemptuously of Doughty's "incomprehensible poetry" I forebore to tell him that my son David, at the age of fourteen, had exulted over and was as much thrilled as myself by the heroic passages in the Fifth Book of the epic. But Blunt was a minor poet, with his taste long crystallized by literary precedents. It required the space of a generation before Doughty's figure, aloof, disinterested, unbending, could be seen in its impressive stature. In 1908, the stiff doors of the academic portals swung open, Oxford conferring a degree on Doughty early in the year, and the Royal Geographical Society bestowing its Founder's Gold Medal on him in 1912, both honors being long over-due, a belated fruit of Dr. Hogarth's persistent efforts, though he modestly veils the fact, and attributes the Royal Geographical Society's tardy recognition to Lord Curzon's influence. But Lord Curzon, I may add, had previously declined the publisher's invitation to write the Introduction to "Wanderings In Arabia."

It is interesting to hear on Dr. Hogarth's authority that Colonel T. E. Lawrence's career was profoundly influenced by "Arabia Deserta." In 1909, Dr. Hogarth wrote to Doughty to introduce one of his aides (at Carchenish), an Oxford undergraduate, "a boy of extraordinary aptitude both for archæology and wandering life among Arabs. Some day I trust you will meet him: he knows 'Arabia Deserta' nearly by heart." And an interesting letter follows the same year from Lawrence in Damascus giving some particulars to Doughty of the latter's old Arab friends. In his last pages Dr. Hogarth tells us:

> the opinions of more than one of his best friends left Doughty puzzled and astonished. Those for instance of Lawrence. Deeply attached to his strange follower though he was he could not approve "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom," which was submitted to him in 1924 in its least expurgated form, and between the lines of his letter of acknowledgment one may read distressed surprise. He thought, as he said to a mutual friend, that in Lawrence's own interests a good many passages should be omitted. Some in fact were omitted in the final edition, though in other interests than its author's.

The inference to be drawn, one which his biographer conveys subtly in many finely shaded passages, is that Doughty was a great man with an extraordinarily concentrated vision, who stood with his face averted from contemporary life. He was oblivious of modern developments round him, social, political, and literary, save for the evidence he drew to fortify his faith in patriotism and poetry. This deliberate blindness and his instinct to shut off modernity increased his inner concentration as much as it narrowed his field of vision. "Arabia Deserta" as I have said elsewhere "is not a book: it's a continent." Everything in art, science, and literature that could help Doughty to mirror the archaic life of that land, he employed. Everything that could impede his vision of the great barbarian ocean of life that he conjures up before us in "The Dawn in Britain" he ignored. In his finest poem, "Adam Cast Forth," as Dr. Hogarth states, Adam is both primitive man and a titanic khalil suffering all that Doughty suffered on "the sun-smitten coasts of Arabia." There never was a better instance of genius seeking the food that nourished it. It was not accident that led Doughty to Arabia but instinct.

By his exploration of "Arabia Deserta" Doughty discovered himself and in mirroring its life he forged his great style. As "The Cliffs" and "The Lands" show, Doughty's genius was not at home in modern England. His mind stood aloof from it, and the immense feat he accomplished, both linguistically and in creative imagination, in writing "The Dawn in Britain," Professor Barker Fairley has explained clearly in the sixth chapter of his study. Everything about Doughty was uncommon as Dr. Hogarth's authoritative and masterly life shows. The book is a monument to its maker as well as to its subject and to it each fresh generation of readers must turn in curiosity.

In Mesopotamia

ADVENTURE CALLS: By KATHARINE WOOLLEY. New York: Minton, Balch & Co. 1929. $2.

Reviewed by KERMIT ROOSEVELT

A "RATTLING good tale," a time honored phrase or one hackneyed beyond hope of redemption, as you choose, but still the best description of "Adventure Calls."

The Gillespies are a Scotch family who for successive generations have "taken up the white man's burden" in the near and middle East. Anyone who has wandered in the East has met with scions of these far-flung families. They may be brilliant or they may be dull, but their name stands for something among the natives to which the most gifted stranger cannot hope to attain.

Mrs. Woolley hangs her story upon three members of the family; an elder brother and twins, a boy and a girl. Born in Baghdad, they come back to a post-war Mesopotamia, seething with unrest and discontent. There they play their parts in averting a general uprising and massacre. There are thrills aplenty; but however close the call is, it is always well within the realms of possibility, and never falls into the category of so many of the Indian Frontier stories that build impossible scenes, place impossible people in them, and have them do impossible things.

Mrs. Woolley knows her country and its inhabitants, foreign and native. You feel this all through, but it is never thrust upon you, and above all she does not pack her novel with a multiplicity of Arabic phrases, than which there is nothing more fatiguing or more in use by writers who know but little about a country, and are anxious to give the impression of a deep and intimate acquaintance with local customs.

It is not an exaggeration to say that there is a dearth of good novels about Mesopotamia for, as a matter of fact, I personally know of only one and that, "Miss Haroun al Raschid," was written before the War. "Hajji Abdullah," while an excellent picture of Marsh Arab life, is not and was not intended to be a novel.

It is to be hoped that "Adventure Calls" is only the forerunner of future novels, and that if Mrs. Woolley finds the chance she will tell the story of Colonel Leachman and Major Soane and other unsung adventurers whose work in Mesopotamia and Kurchistan during the War could provide enough narrow escapes to fill a dozen novels.

Whatever your tastes or age, read "Adventure Calls."

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The Bowling Green

Truant Reading

I FOUND in myself lately an impulse to reread "Marius the Epicurean," and in the early pages of that pacifying book I was struck by two phrases—"a diligent promotion of the capacity of the eye;" and "if our modern education really conveys to us any idealizing power, it does so oftenest by truant reading."—"Marius" is always an excellent sedative; perhaps more than any other book I can think of it is definitely associated for me with the circumstances of my first reading of it—the hot plush seats of the commuters' smoking car between Wyncote and Philadelphia on the much loved old Cinder and Bloodshot railroad. Perhaps the clarity of that association is due to the book's rather special power of sharpening one's sensibilities.—It occurs to me in this present reading that Pater uses the word "bland" once or twice too often.

A reviewer in the Nashville *Tennesseean* wants to know what I meant by saying of Elinor Wylie's "Venetian Glass Nephew" that it is "a perfect work of art; and carrying the burdens that any perfection must bear." I meant that all complete perfections are deliberately limited in scope, and limited in effect to the susceptibilities of those who can understand them.

Of the books I have read lately, these seemed to me the most important:—

All Quiet on the Western Front, by Erich Remarque.

Poor Women! by Norah Hoult

The History of Egg Pandervil, by Gerald Bullett

Hunky, by Thames Williamson

Ultima Thule, by "Henry Handel Richardson."

The last of these has not yet been published; it deserves to cause a stir.

In a bulletin of the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation I find that Dr. G. R. Havens, of Ohio State University, has been granted a fellowship to prepare a catalogue of Voltaire's library, in Leningrad. It would be interesting to hear just how and why Voltaire's books got moved to Russia. How long have they been there?

Orson Lowell quite rightly reproaches me for having kept a treasure of his several years without reprinting anything from it. The book is "The NONPAREIL; or The Quintessence of Wit and Humour: being a Choice Selection of those Pieces that were most admired in the ever-to-be-remembered *Midwife,* or, Old Woman's Magazine. LONDON, 1757." I make reparation by copying from the Nonpareil this anonymous conviviality:—

VERSES WRITTEN IN A LONDON CHOPHOUSE

Maria now I'll cease to sing,
And all the op'ning sweets of spring:
The *Chop-house* in my verse shall ring,
  Where lives my lovely *Jenny*.

Where antient cooks exert their art;
No youthful damsel bears a part:
Yet one has broil'd my very heart,
  And that was lovely *Jenny*.

Brown as the walnut is her hair,
Her skin is like the napkin fair,
  More blooming than red cabbage, are
  The cheeks of lovely *Jenny*.

Each sav'ry dish to cit and fop
She bears, herself a nicer chop;
How far more elegant, to sop
  And feast on lovely *Jenny*.

More tempting than the smoaking stake,
Or sweetest tart her fingers make!
I'd lose my dinner for the sake
  Of tasting lovely *Jenny*.

But when I pay for stake or tart,
I act a very miser's part;
At once my money and my heart,
  I give to lovely *Jenny*.

Let *Jove* his fam'd ambrosia eat;
  And youthful *Hebe* ever wait;
I envy not his joy or state,
  While serv'd by lovely *Jenny*.

While *British* herrings *Britons* love,
Or city throats with custards move;
While nectar pleases mighty *Jove,*
  So long shall I love *Jenny*.

And when at length the beauty dies,
Oh! cut her into little pies!
Like jelly-stars she'll grace the skies,
  So bright is lovely *Jenny*.

—*The Nonpareil,* London, 1757

THE OLD PRIEST'S HOUSE, MUCHELNEY.

Those who believe in the eventual rediscovery of Thoreau—an author particularly readable in summer vacancies—will be interested in this letter from Professor Raymond Adams of the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, N. C.):—

TO ADMIRERS OF HENRY THOREAU

"It was pleasant to see my whole household effects out on the grass."

—Thoreau

And it is pleasant for us who cherish the memory of Thoreau to see these necessities of life which he used in the hut at Walden brought in off the grass and filling a little room in the Antiquarian House with infinite riches of association. Indeed, no other room in Concord means much to a Thoreauan. The visitor today seeks the horse and hound and turtle-dove under the soughing pines or along lapping Walden rather than inside walls.

But the Antiquarian Society House has a roomful of Henry Thoreau's furniture, the very "household effects" that stood on the grass outside the Walden hut. Life-everlasting grew under the table there, said Thoreau. Another life everlasting has invested the little table and bed and chair and flute with inestimable value for all who have found Thoreau in some vivid moment with a book.

The new Antiquarian Society House (to be built at once in the point of land before the Emerson house) will have a Thoreau room adequately displaying the homely little chair and the flute and the other things we know. It seemed to me that it would be a gracious thing for those of us who admire Henry Thoreau to express our admiration in a tangible way by furnishing the Thoreau room at Concord.

The furnishing must be kept at a minimum—it was a bare little house at Walden without any ornament. Nor do I think we should ornament the room in the Antiquarian House, for my idea is that the room should have a bare simplicity about it that is like the simplicity of Thoreau. However, we cannot escape some furnishings, some display cases, some floor covering, some lighting fixtures; and these should be good.

Checks should be made out to The Concord Antiquarian Society. I am acting as agent merely. And I am right glad to carry on this correspondence and do my level best to see to it that the Thoreau room is furnished adequately and simply.

The collection at Concord would profit by having added to it first editions, pictures, and articles that have a Thoreau association. Some admirers of Thoreau have indicated that they would contribute things from their own collections rather than money for furnishings. I had not hoped for such a response, but I am glad the suggestion has come. I will see to it that such contributions are deposited in the room at Concord with proper credit. Indeed, the enrichment of the collection seems to me a more worthy object than furnishing the room, though right now the room needs furnishing.

E. O. H. writes from a New England city:—

When you go across the courtyard of the hotel Casino in Cherbourg you go up some stairs. I mean the court where the concerts take place. And right at the head of the stairs on the third floor is a little cheap one-window room with a balcony, and I lived there for ten days once. The gravel court in the sun smelt slightly of cats. Do you suppose I'll ever go back? . . .

We live in a grand place now, where everybody is either French-Canadian or Italian, and they are very friendly, teaching me how to clean rugs without a vacuum cleaner, etc., and there is one neighbor who plays an accordion with such abandon and skill! The kids all gather in the yard, and the janitor souses them down with a thick stream of water from the hose which nearly sweeps them off their feet. It is very clean and there is a tree both fore and aft. Across the street there is a big green parrot, who entertains the whole neighborhood. Perhaps I'm unduly sentimental about it because we're moving.

I've never had much use for *causes,* as such, but I have one now, *trained animals.* We went to the circus, and I can't forget it. Humans in cages or doing tricks can at least *think* of something else, but no one can tell about lions . . . and that man lashed them across the face. There was only one bright spot in the whole thing: just after the lions about twelve men in uniforms went into the ring, and for just one second I hoped one of the snarliest tigers would come out and put *them* through their paces. But they were only scene shifters.

There's something else nice about this place. Around the corner are any number of automobile salesrooms, and the most gorgeous sleek motors glide up and down our street.

Referring again to Professor Trevelyan's essay "Must England's Beauty Perish?" I reprint here a picture from his pamphlet. I'm afraid the reproduction won't do justice to it. It is The Old Priest's House at Muchelney, a 14th century cottage purchased for $1000 by the Preservation Trust and restored to good condition. Muchelney is near Langport, in Somerset. Perhaps some client will have a look at the old cottage this summer and write to the Bowling Green about it.

In Herbert Read's review of "All Quiet on the Western Front," in the London *Nation,* there is a passage which should go into the minutes:—

> This book is the bible of the common soldier, the tommy in the front-line, who month after month endured the mess and stink of death, and all the loud riot of killing, the testament of the only man who is competent and worthy to speak of the war. When this kind of experience is presented in anger and without art, it only arouses resentment and pity. But the book wins our sympathy by its detachment and by its aesthetic merits. It is a superb piece of construction. It consists of a number of separate scenes and events, varying in tone from the farcical to the tragic, which piece together into a mosaic which has a unity of its own. Each scene is representative of a phase of war experience; at the end of the book it is difficult to think of any significant experience of a man at the front which is not represented: everything is there—horror, coarseness, lewdness, humor, pathos, comradeship, even the unexpected beauty of nature. Gradually death takes toll of it all.

Among the various kinds of Truant Reading, not the least rewarding are booksellers' and publishers' catalogues. There is a cheerful outfit at 30 Museum Street, London that calls itself the Scholartis Press. (I wonder if the staff have lunch in that magnificent pub on the corner of the street, across from the British Museum, where I once saw the finest ham of a lifetime.) Always in the Scholartis Press catalogue I find some oddities of information and pronunciamento. There is something rather fey about this item:—

DISSERTATIONS IN ESSENCE, by The Rev. R. E. H. Duke, has been withdrawn from circulation and is, therefore, out of print. Neither author nor publisher desire any correspondence on the subject.

The Scholartis Press catalogue has considerably more humor than most of his guild permit themselves. It is pleasant to learn from him, apropos a volume of Rossetti's Letters, that "Rossetti was a great hand at a limerick, especially of the smoking-room kind." The allusion is to Dante Gabriel, not Christina.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

"One of the first to recognize the genius of the British Poet Laureate, who has been awarded the coveted Order of Merit, was Robert Louis Stevenson," says the *Manchester Guardian.* "Sir Sidney Colvin recorded how R. L. S. came to his wife one day with the first volume of Dr. Bridge's poems and began to read her passages here and there, declaring that here was a wonderful new genius. Such was his enthusiasm that, feeling Lady Colvin listened rather coldly, he cried, 'My God, I don't believe you like them!' flung the book across the room, and stalked from the room in a paroxysm of disappointment."

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Books of Special Interest

Modernists

THE AMERICAN CARAVAN II. Edited by ALFRED KREYMBORG, LEWIS MUMFORD, and PAUL ROSENFELD. New York. The Macaulay Company. 1928. $5.

Reviewed by LOLA RIDGE

THE reading of this yearbook, in which almost all the modern trends, at least in fiction, are in some sort represented, is in itself an arduous adventure. It is like seeing the entire American literary movement, with all its irreconcilable parts loosely drawn together and in a state of suspended hostility, go by in wobbling parade. No matter how defective the available specimens, the editors seem to have felt they had to include at least one of a kind. Their attitude seems to be one of Noah-like responsibility toward each school, it is not only an invitation to open caravan, but the heroic hospitality of an ark: you come in and you . . . and you . . . let's all be brothers together . . . Here is the defect of that ingratiating quality celebrated by Frost in "Something There Is That Does Not Love a Wall." It raises the question as to how far the spirit of toleration, the democratic ideal, should be permitted to invade esthetics. The answer is not at all: there is no place in an esthetic for that which is alien to its pure substance. Tolerance—the endurance of the avoidable—is a corroding ideal which sooner or later leads to the abdication of individual judgment and to compromise with that which the soul secretly abhors. The act of criticism as of creation calls for a certain ruthlessness toward that which would obstruct or deflect the pure stream of purpose. And the editors' purpose is, I take it, to permit no consideration, whether of expediency, prejudice, or courtesy to influence their selection of a work of art. Is it out of their charity they still carry the dead who have died by the way?

There is some insidious influence which prevents men like Sherwood Anderson, whose early work seemed a guarantee of high future achievement, from fulfilling or even meagerly approximating their early promise. I think this influence is fear; the fear of youth, of being considered out of the running, of having to give place to other leaders. This fear is a goad, forcing the mind to concentrate on invention instead of on creation. Energy is expended in a kind of gaudy advertising until the spirit loses the power as well as the sense of direction for fresh flight. Lewis Mumford touches this fear-spot when, in "The Little Testament," he laments: "In America the good die young: there are few splendid and terrible old men." Yes, but it is not that they die young, but that at about middle age they get the fear of youth in their hearts and try to shed their own identities and walk off stiffly with the youngster's gestures. Frost remains undefeated; his poem here is pure Frost. But the authentic essence we know as Sherwood Anderson is not to be found in the shoddy monologue which opens, inauspiciously, these short stories.

Of the varying strains, most of them mongrel, in the "Caravan's" fiction, two emerge which represent respectively the two great trends of literature between which all others fluctuate. The one is under the leadership of Hemingway, whose influence throughout is so marked that I feel justified in examining it, although he is not among the year's contributors. Mr. Hemingway is plainly striving for that exterior perfection the Greeks finally died of because, trapped in a pause of admiration before the glory of flesh and maculate bone, their vision, short and flaming like an ultra-violet ray, showed them no other world to subjugate. When Greek thought expanded it did so in circles. The Greeks shoved horizons before them; they did not transcend horizons. Builders of a male civilization, they had developed to a high degree that power of placing an imaginary boundary about thought which is the chief characteristic of male genius. That which is called classicism is really the male principle functioning in art. It is usually in the ascendent in times of group supremacy and indeed imposes a certain group form, within whose boundaries individual talents may freely express themselves, but whose limitations they may not transcend. The second trend, the female or individualistic principle, which reached its highest pinnacle in the Italian Renaissance, is not easily definable in a current term. Romanticism, as it is understood, indicates the principle in its last stage of degeneration, and realism is inadequate—unless it be understood that romanticism is a part as implicit in the whole of realism as is any one of the primary colors in its prism. I find this element rising to power in the work of Evelyn Scott. She is here represented by a short story, "Speed," a brilliant study of a New York gunman. His type, in which emotional callousness is blent with an extreme nervous excitability, was common in the Florence of the Renaissance, as it is to all civilizations like our own, in which the tempo has been speeded up beyond the ordinary needs of living. During such periods, when life flings up individuals like high peaks, the human soil is fertile for both art and crime. Artist and criminal alike are driven by an uncontrollable urge to expression, which the lower organism can only attain on the plane of action, and by disturbing the social equilibrium readjust its own. The present increase in crimes of violence, especially of the spectacular hold-up, is indicative of an impending flowering in the arts, to be dominated by the female individualistic principle—of which, by the way, fantasy is one of the vents, setting free the submerged parts of personality.

Evelyn Scott's style is rich and luminous. Her words throw out light and heat. In their bright, hard luster the figures of Dicky and his mistress are depicted with a terrible vividness. At moments one has an almost startling sense of a shared experience. Dicky does not suggest a mechanism that has been wound up and started going as much as a part of the veritable human — a part integral in every human—which has taken to itself an augmented power and dominates its whole. He has in him the quality of life which connotes unpredictability and this quality separates him sharply from Hemingway's killers, who fit as snugly into their author's purpose as they do into their own tailored coats. While the Greeks recorded a period when the beauty of surfaces was the true religious cult, our artists have to depict an age in which the business suit is omniscient. Human exteriors, from clothes to spiritual cuticle, are ugly as the doors through which we harried humans sidle in and out. Both Hemingway and Scott are fascinated by these exteriors, both picture them with exactitude, both are seekers after reality. But Hemingway rests upon the symbol; whatever of deeper import he imparts we glimpse through its insoluble surface only as another surface. We observe the beetle, transfixed while in the act of flying but no longer capable of flight. Life is a wheel that grinds inexorably on. We know that at a certain point in its revolution the killers will run down the kill, because they too are under the compulsion of the spokes. But we do not know, even at the first tentative gesture of violence, whether Dicky will drag his trull to the station or slay her where she stands, because he does not know himself. We are witnessing life in the flux and with a deciding factor of free will. For Evelyn Scott goes beyond the symbol. She is a seeker for that reality which sheds its momentary image and departs and which cannot be held long enough to die in the hands.

John Herrmann, whose full length novel appears in this "Caravan," is one of three new writers, all of whom will, I think, leave their imprint on American letters. Herrmann is between the two trends I have been discussing. His technique is influenced by Gertrude Stein—whose jazz is in the way of becoming the folklore of the American intellectuals, and has in it the mysticism of a child who, twirling dizzily on its heels, isolates itself by staring blankly at the sky of which it does not even see the light. It is a rhythm peculiarily suited to the ignominious life he presents, life turning upon itself in shrinking circles, yet still capable of spontaneous movement and conditioned only by its own ghastly limitations. In this story of a broken engagement, Mr. Herrmann really paints with appalling impressiveness the repulsive old age of the pioneer ideal. His aging business man, surrounded by his battening women, has won dollars from his metallic world by a hard and abstemious life, even as his ancestors wrested a living from their stony soil. He still has their kindliness and hardihood of purpose. But in his daughter's degenerate lover, who desires only to spend without toil, is foreshadowed the dissolution of the pioneer culture, now in its industrial phase, and the overthrow of the industrial system as we know it. I do not think Mr. Herrmann wrote his novel in full consciousness of its implications. Unlike Morley Callaghan who has only pity for his homely beleagured children, whom he seems to have experienced in all their dimensions, Herrmann suffers from a spiritual shortsightedness which makes him despise those with whom he moves in a kind of vitrolic twilight. But he has reported a phase of our civilization so truthfully that its significance is manifest.

Gerald Sykes and Jonathan Leonard are the other new writers. Mr. Leonard, who has here attained the greatest stature of the three, posits the problem of a man who wishes to reform a world he does not love. He is a type, like Robespierre, doomed to martyrdom without honor—an angle of consciousness in a generation of curves, which, sliding gracefully from contact, leaves only the angle shattered. Mr. Leonard's style is arid, without color. It suggests generations through which the emotions have cooled under mind's disapproval . . . at length the dancer no longer puts flowers in his hair . . . but his eyes see deep. Gerald Sykes, a much younger man, has something of Mr. Leonard's unflinching invision. His mind gives out an opaque light; it is one to which curious eyes will not be able to approach too close for the fluid and secretive will which surrounds it as the glass of an arc surrounds its flame. In the best of the remaining short stories, wishful, pushing fingers grope for the closed hearts of things—that stay closed. In the worst romanticism is running a sub-normal temperature. These hasty writers have not waited, like all the lusty story-tellers from Chaucer down, to turn controvert experience into art with an interval of time between. The women, particularly, have not merely betrayed the esthetic to the emotions that are its legitimate prey and on whose dripping blood it must feed to become sleek and beautiful; they have sacrificed it to plaster images, pieced together from the scrap heaps of modern psychology and imposed on yet fomenting experience. They bear hysterical witness to the influence of that arch-romanticist, Freud.

Freud, expressing in one medium content which obviously called for another, has injected so much emotion, much of it spurious, into modern thought that he has not only disorganized the creative process in many, he has induced a kind of impotence in the primitive emotions themselves. I believe he shares, with the great war, responsibility for much of the inner disorganization in current literature. I find this in two novelettes, one by Edna Bryner, the other by H. D. Both are written with artistry; both manifest, through different techniques, the same curious dislocation between phrase and theme, both give an effect of activity without being—the motion of something that does not move but is being moved. In H. D.'s story a jumbled litter of things and people, shaken to scintillance in a bright memory, throw off lustrous dust. The nerves pirouette over the dead emotions, and in part to the rhythm of the Stein jazz—to H. D. and alien tempo in which her thoughts flutter like butterflies excited by a magpie. Lewis Mumford, likewise, juggles too many empty shells. Typical is his use of colors. Colors in memory exist as in a prism. It is difficult to separate them alive from the glow that has become their element. Like all live things that swarm in light they can be killed by inapposite handling. Yet under all his brightly ordered disorder there is organic movement; some strong pulse of life, pressed down in consciousness, has hardly space in which to beat.

I do not find this audience-consciousness among the poets, though few of their offerings this year call forth that instinctive obeisance the mind makes before new light thrown on beauty or truth freshly presented. Neither Alfred Kreymborg nor Jean Toomer have produced at their former levels. Mr. Toomer rambles on like one who has learned a few words of a strange language and repeats them endlessly. Now and then a thought leaves him, opens, and floats away. The eyes widen at its lovely whiteness as at a first snowflake, but the body of his thought is not yet accouched. Kreymborg's failure is due partly to a slovenly presentation—surprising in a man who has shown his mastery of delicate and unique rhythms. Partly, I think, because the heavy narrative poem is not suited to his light instrument. Mark Van Doren's poem stands out. It has some quality in common with much of Frost. Several of the poets have taken death as a subject. Of these Yvor Winters faces the enemy in sombre earnest and with bladed lines, sharp as surgeons' lancets. Babette Deutsch evokes some dark force, untouchable by death yet Aiken uses death strictly as poetic property —which is perhaps why his docile wraiths, who for forty-two pages weep or "smile evilly," or dance to order on the spangled cobweb of his fancy, yet remain unimpregnated by the demon lover of his imagination. Mr. Aiken responds sensitively to such of the infinite parts of beauty as have been welded into wholes in the heat of other minds. Whatever of creative utterance is his will be found embedded, still-born, in some lovely phrase. There seems to be in him some extinct cell wherein, instead of that expanding particle which bursts all walls to growth, is a little puff of fairy-like dust. In "The Burning of Venus" this dust blows up magically in a brief flower of flame, and throughout the poem are lines and images of poignant loveliness. Mr. Aiken's other poem, also on death, is in approach curiously like the young and gifted Josephine Strongin's. Both have a hollow music—the music of a small pink shell, wishfully making believe it is the God-ravaged sea. These plaintive murmurs make me crave, perversely, for the disturbing voice—how many eagle cries above—of that great death-carrier, Robinson Jeffers.

A Study in Taste

THE GOTHIC REVIVAL: A Study in the History of Taste. By KENNETH CLARK. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1929.

Reviewed by W. S. LEWIS

IT seems incredible that this is the first book on the Gothic Revival. One would expect volumes on a subject so important in the history of taste, but it has been left to Mr. Clark to be the historian of a phase equally rich for the scholar and the satirist. If Mr. Clark had carried out his original intention of including a bibliography of the subject—his excuse for not doing so is that he mentions all the books in footnotes —one would have had striking evidence of the neglect this melancholy business has suffered. I miss only one reference, and that Mr. Clark, an Englishman, could hardly be expected to find. It is a dissertation by Blanche Rigge for the degree of Master of Philosophy at the University of Chicago in 1909 called "The Place of Horace Walpole in the Gothic Revival." There is a typescript of it in the New York Public Library. The title is, alas, the most interesting part of the work.

Mr. Clark's book is scholarly and as delightful as it is important. He perhaps does not realize how widely we in this country have been affected by the Gothic Revival. That might be the subject of a long postscript to his book, for just as every village and town in England still has its descendants of Strawberry Hill, so has every American town that can trace its antiquity beyond 1900. The Gothic Revival spread from its narrow borders until it enslaved the English-speaking world.

As Mr. Clark states in his Introduction, he has tried "to answer the question how this great change of taste came about." He shows that it was largely literary in its inception, above all, the work of Horace Walpole and what might be called his Staff—Gray the scholar, Chute the connoisseur, and Bentley the artist. While quoting the Gothic verses of Pope, Dyer, and Mallet (1717-1727), it would have been interesting, I think, to have included Walpole's lines on King's College Chapel (1736) and shown their echoes in Wordsworth's first sonnet on the same building—which, if any one building might claim the distinction, can be called the mountainhead of the Gothic Revival. This poem of Walpole's, which was chaperoned by Gray, was written four years before Joseph Warton's "Enthusiast" and is an invocation to the Gothic spirit antedating "The Castle of Otranto" by nearly thirty years.

If Mr. Clark does not completely answer his own question, he can hardly be blamed, for the subject is curiously new and difficult. Walpole's letters to Mann in 1750 exclaiming over the New Taste which they had suddenly got into, set one wondering about the strange spirit that was abroad. Where, precisely, did it first appear and how? In whose breast and upon what spot did the immortal spark first kindle beauty? Its development as "purely" directed by Gray and Walpole, and "bastardized" by Batty Langley and Miller, we know. But the genesis of it all remains more mysterious than the aisles of Fonthill or the holy glooms of Strawberry Hill itself.

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Books of Special Interest

A Puritan Divine

COTTON MATHER—KEEPER OF THE PURITAN CONSCIENCE. By RALPH and LOUISE BOAS. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1928. $3.50.

Reviewed by KENNETH B. MURDOCK

IN the two centuries since his death Cotton Mather has provoked historians and controversialists to much dogmatism and much myth-making, proclaimed usually with sound and fury. No good biography of Mather appeared till 1891, when Barrett Wendell wrote one, incomplete but informed with a sympathetic and moderate attitude toward the not wholly attractive personality of its subject. Apparently the doings of this colonial minister, politician, scholar, amateur of science, editor, and writer, are interesting still, for Wendell's "Cotton Mather" was reissued in 1926, and since then there have been published at least two shorter biographical and critical sketches, followed now by Mr. and Mrs. Boas's book.

Their work is admirable in many respects. For one thing, it obviously attempts to do justice to its difficult subject. For another it, for the most part, resists, in spite of the suspicion cast upon it by its sub-title, any temptation to draw from the study of Mather's career sweeping general conclusions about his compatriots, their creed, or their final position in history. The authors are content usually to display what they can of the character they treat, and to tell the story of the life of one—and not the most representative—Puritan divine. They have not made a first-hand study of the sources, except in a capable and sane, though too confident chapter on the witchcraft episode, but they have used intelligently most of the modern studies of Mather and have shown judgment and critical prowess in digging through the mass of legend and prejudice which has gathered about his name. They rephrase much of the story in the jargon of current psychology, and although this rarely contributes anything new to the understanding of the man they describe, it does, of course, bring the book into tune with recent biographical modes. They display picturesquely, though not always adequately, the little world in which Mather lived, and with great skill they make from the tale of his life a readable story in which the none too plentiful possibilities for color and dramatic action are taken advantage of to the full.

Unfortunately the book has more than its share of small errors in fact and of hazardous generalizations which distort the picture. It is well that Cotton Mather, if he is to be remembered at all, should be dealt with in a book as well written and as entertaining as this, but it is a pity that it must so often disappoint the reader who seeks not only entertainment but historical truth. Moreover it is woefully incomplete. The sketch it gives of Cotton Mather is well drawn and the general estimate of him is, so far as it goes, probably just enough, but the whole man is not revealed. In his own eyes the long list of his printed books must have seemed one of his greatest achievements. In those books, whatever their literary value, his learning and his ideas are displayed as nowhere else. Yet Mr. and Mrs. Boas dismiss Cotton Mather, the writer, in a few words and with no knowledge of more than a small part of what he saw fit to publish. Inevitably, therefore, their remarks on his intellectual powers are to be sceptically received. There is a good chance, too, that material of biographical importance tucked away in his prefaces and sermons has been neglected in this book. Certainly Cotton Mather's story, as told by the Boases, leaves too much out of account an activity to which he gave himself wholeheartedly and in which he exposed certain defects and certain good qualities of mind which should be a part of any discerning portrait.

Probably there will never be a complete life of Mather. His own energy was so great that the task of the biographer who would follow close at his heels is too laborious to be complacently undertaken in a day when his significance seems far less than it once did. Wendell's life of him gives part of the story, and, perhaps, all that is necessary. So does the Boas's book, although its verdicts, based as they are on but part of the evidence, cannot always be trusted, and although its merits are rather in its freedom from prejudice and its excellence as biographical narrative than in complete fidelity to fact.

Native India

THE LAST HOME OF MYSTERY. By E. ALEXANDER POWELL. New York: The Century Co. 1929. $4.

Reviewed by CHARLES BATCHELDER

NEPAL is a country which has been visited by few white men, owing to the rigid policy of exclusion practised by its rulers, but Mr. Powell succeeded in "crashing the gates" and his resulting book is filled with descriptions which have rarely been equalled of its natural beauties, picturesque buildings, and unusual customs. He is a master of the art of word painting and makes the scenes seem as vivid as if seen in a color "movie." The excellent illustrations provide the details which the text cannot cover.

Mr. Powell on this trip travelled over India as the guest of Maharajas, and made his way by motor from Bagdad to Damascus. His observations on the Indian Princes are filled with interest. But, not satisfied with writing a most fascinating book of travel and adventure, he decided to introduce a sensational and controversial element by describing certain features of Indian religions and customs in the frankest manner. The chapter on "Unclean Gods" and many bits in the other sections are lurid in the extreme and make the accounts of repellent practices in Miss Mayo's "Mother India" seem tame in comparison. He makes the worship of Siva and Kali, to which many millions of Hindus are devoted, seem indefensible and abominable. His is one of the most skilful and convincing attacks upon the Hindu religion in print and is likely to arouse a wave of resentment, if it comes to the notice of the Indian public. In his treatment of the sex aspect, Mr. Powell certainly approaches the verge.

He evidently had some doubts himself for he says: "It will also be said by its champions that I have not presented a fair picture of Hinduism—that I have merely picked out a few sensational examples which are not characteristic. It is true that it is impossible to generalize with complete accuracy on any subject connected with Hinduism, for India is a vast country, and practices which are common in Mysore are unknown in Kashmir and *vice versa*." Nevertheless, he has produced the impression that certain practices are extremely common, if not universal, when they are extremely rare and would be condemned by Hindu opinion if they were generally known. He has presented only the degraded side of the religion, and gives no hint that there is also a spiritual side even to the Nature worship symbolized by the "lingam." It is practically impossible, however, to disprove his statements, for he often describes accurately what he has seen, though he does not give the correct interpretation. In other cases, he has taken his statements from hearsay or from little known authorities. Throughout the book there is an absence of attempts to verify gossip, which is repeated if it is picturesque. At times, there are errors of fact. The Aga Khan, for instance, is not "the head of all the Mohammedans of India," but only of a sect which is relatively small in numbers. The whole book bears the stamp of his method, as he describes it: "That is the way I like to do things—impulsively, on the spur of the moment, without debating them in my mind." Now, this may make books sensational, even attractive, but it does not lead to accuracy.

In reading books on India it is wise to bear in mind the inherent probabilities of the case. No country, no religion, no social organization, could persist through ages, if it were as debased, degraded, and corrupt as Indian life is here described. There may be shocking abuses of many kinds, but there is also deep and sincere religious devotion, happy and self-sacrificing family life, and a social organization well adapted to past Oriental conditions, though radical changes will be forced in the immediate future. Human nature is fundamentally the same in many lands.

It is said that books like this do great harm by arousing hostility between educated Indian leaders and the Anglo-Saxon countries. Perhaps this is true. They certainly instigate much propaganda from Indian authors and lecturers. On the other hand, one who visits India at frequent intervals cannot fail to notice that the revelation of practices which shock European opinion stimulate efforts to remove them, which probably would not be made if they remained in obscurity. Letting in the sunlight is one of the best remedies for slime and filth.

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Art

WHAT IS ART? AND ESSAYS ON ART. By *Leo Tolstoy*. Translated by *Louise* and *Aylmer Maude*. Oxford University Press.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM STUDIES. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

AMERICAN ETCHERS. Vol. I. Ernest D. Roth. Vol. II. Alfred Hutty. New York: T. Spencer Hutson.

Belles Lettres

THE DECLINE OF THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV OR FRENCH LITERATURE. By *Arthur Tilley*. Cambridge University Press. (Macmillan).

SHAKESPEARE. By *Nathan Kaufman*. Raymond Book Co. $2.

QUARTO CLUB PAPERS. Pynson Printers.

THE ENJOYMENT OF LITERATURE. By *Jay B. Hubbell*. Macmillan. $1.75.

PROGRESS IN LITERATURE. By *Lascelles Abercrombie*. Cambridge University Press (Macmillan).

VOICES OF THE AGE. Edited by *J. Presley Pound*. Harpers. $2.50.

LITERARY ETHICS. By *H. M. Paull*. Dutton. $3.75.

CHAUCER AND THE ROMAN POETS. By *Edgar Finley Shannon*. Harvard University Press. $4.

HIGH SPOTS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE. By *Merle Johnson*. New York: Bennett Book Studios.

Biography

SKY LARKING. By *Bruce Gould*. Liveright. $2.50.

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ALEXANDRE DUMAS. By *H. A. Spurr*. Dutton. $3.

THE LETTERS OF TOLSTOY AND HIS COUSIN COUNTESS ALEXANDRA TOLSTOY. Translated from the Russian by *Leo Islavin*. Dutton. $3.

EUGENE O'NEILL. By *Barrett H. Clark*. McBride. $1.50.

THE LIFE OF TOLSTOY. By *Aylmer Maude*. Oxford University Press. 2 vols.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS WITH EARL HAIG. By *Sergeant Secrett*. Duffield. $2.50.

KINGS, CHURCHILLS AND STATESMEN. By *Knut Hagberg*. Dodd, Mead. $4.

CLARK OF THE OHIO. By *Frederick Palmer*. Dodd, Mead. $5.

FOCH SPEAKS. By *Major Charles Bugnet*. Dial. $3.

THE LITERARY BIBLE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON. Johns Hopkins Press. $3.

JOHN D. By *John K. Winkler*. Macy-Masius. $2.25.

THE WATERS OF AFRICA. By *Alfred Aloysius Horn*. Simon & Schuster. $3.50.

LETTERS OF REBECCA GRATZ. Edited by *David Philipson*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.

LIVING EAST. By *David Wooster King*. Duffield. $3.

ANDREW JOHNSON. By *Lloyd Paul Stryker*. Macmillan. $6.

WHEN FUR WAS KING. By *Henry John Moberly* and *William Bleasdell Cameron*. Dutton. $2.75.

WILLIAM THE FIRST. By *Paul Wiegler*. Houghton Mifflin. $5.

Fiction

THE LOVER. By NAOMI ROYDE-SMITH. Harpers. 1929. $2.50.

The life that lies behind the life we lead from day to day, the world that lies behind the world we open our eyes upon each morning, hold for Naomi Royde-Smith a reality not to be found in the familiar factual existence which so adequately supplies the needs of many novelists. Actualities are of value for her principally as implications. The essential for her lies beyond the observable.

This preoccupation with the other world might lead some authors quite away from realism and familiar detail. With Naomi Royde-Smith it leads rather to more particular concern with observation and presentation of the scene, since the reader is to find by looking beyond the sensuously given that "other" which the author has had at first hand. So the novels of Naomi Royde-Smith do present fresh, intimate, natural background and quick essential characterization, whether or not the overtones are as clear as intended.

"The Lover" is a study in the exquisite. It is a stylistic attempt to catch, and make permanent on a plane beyond experience, an episode which, within that plane, is already "past." An old lover, an artist, meets again the love of his youth. They talk a dawn away. That is all of the physical action of the story, yet that is almost nothing of the story. Delicately, elusively, while this harlequinade is bright before the eyes, the reality of "The Lover" is built up. This reality is the realization by the lover that the joy and pain of his love, while utterly dead now, were of equal importance as "the means by which the things time had taken from them [the lovers] had been made eternal and were now revealed to them as existing out of time in an indestructible continuity of established experience that had passed beyond their reach." The very difficult transition from life as lived to life as philosophical material is not, unfortunately, accomplished so smoothly as to eliminate all thought of the author's effort. One knows what Miss Royde-Smith is trying to do, one may admit that she does it, but one ought not to be so conscious of it as an achievement.

MINSTRELS IN SATIN. By ELIZABETH COBB CHAPMAN. Doubleday, Doran. 1929. $2.50.

In her second novel, Mrs. Chapman tells a skilful, sophisticated, amusing tale of curiously regulated family life, concerned mainly with Fanny, the irresponsible mother, and her two daughters, Penelope and Camilla. When we first meet this devoted trio and Camilla's twin, George, the children are in their early 'teens. They are all living in Florence, Fanny, five years before, having left her prosaic husband in America and sought more congenial associations abroad. She is ardent, still attractive, mad about men, absorbed in the ambition to retain her fading charms, and to be reckoned with as one of the world's great sweethearts. After the outbreak of the war, she sends her children back to their father and his people in New York, but herself remains in Europe to do her bit, which consists in brightening the lonely days of handsome allied officers on leave.

Not until four years later is dear Fanny reunited with her beloved daughters, and then with a shock she realizes that they are radiant, grown-up young women in whose pulchritude she is reflected as an aging hasbeen. Again the three return to Europe, this time with the purpose of having Camilla's rich voice trained for grand opera by the masters, and several years of hectic excitement follow, in the course of which Fanny remarries, Camilla gains a Syrian millionaire for husband and by means of him is established as a Continental musical celebrity. It is only the deep, reticent, self-sacrificing Penelope, her stronger nature dedicated to preserving the erratic mother and sister from the costs of their own folly, who seems destined to live in denial and frustration of her individuality. The shrewdly contrasted characters of the three, particularly those of the daughters as they pass from childhood to early maturity, are drawn with the utmost clarity and conviction. A novel which strikes that rare, happy mean between the serious and the gay, "Minstrels in Satin" should not fail to be included in one's list of summer fiction.

VIENNESE LOVE. By *Hugo Bettauer*. Macaulay. $2.

A MAN SCANS HIS PAST. By *M. Constantin-Weyer*. Macaulay. $2.50.

KNIGHT'S GAMBIT. By *Guy Pocock*. Dutton. $2.50.

THE DOUBLE AXE. By *Audrey Haggard*. Dutton. $2.50.

THE PEOPLE OF SELDWYLA. By *Gottfried Keller*. Dutton. $2.50.

THE SEVEN VICES. By *Guglielmo Ferrero*. Harcourt, Brace. 2 vols.

THE MASQUERADERS. By *Georgette Heyer*. Longmans, Green. $2.

GINEVRA. By *Virginia Watson*. Dutton. $2.50.

THE MAN IN THE QUEUE. By *Gordon Daviot*. Dutton. $2.

PAYING GUESTS. By *E. F. Benson*. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50 net.

AN IMPERFECT LOVER. By *Robert Gore Browne*. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50 net.

THE JEFFERSON SECRET. By *Richard Blaker*. Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

FISH PREFERRED. By *P. G. Wodehouse*. Doubleday, Doran. $2 net.

EILEEN OF THE TREES. By *H. De Vere Stacpoole*. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50 net.

YELLOW MUNRO. By *Gerard Fairlie*. Little, Brown. $2 net.

GRIM VENGEANCE. By *J. J. Connington*. Little, Brown. $2 net.

TOMAHAWK RIGHTS. By *Hal G. Evarts*. Little, Brown. $2 net.

THE SHADOW. By *Jeffery Farnol*. Little, Brown. $2.50 net.

HUNKY. By *Thames Willamson*. Coward-McCann. $2.50.

THE BLACK CAMEL. By *Earl Derr Biggers*. Bobbs-Merrill. $2.

THE FIVE FLAMBOGS. By *Francis Beeding*. Little, Brown. $2 net.

Juvenile

(*The Children's Bookshop appears on page* 1153)

(*Continued on page* 1152)

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Foreign Literature

Recent German Drama

DIE NACHT VOR DEM BEIL. By ALFRED WOLFENSTEIN. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. 1929.
GESELLSCHAFT DER MENSCHENRECHTE. By FRANZ THEODOR CSOKOR. Vienna: Paul Zsolnay. 1929.
DAS PERCHTENSPIEL. By RICHARD BILLINGER. Leipzig: Insel Verlag. 1929.
DAS WEIB DES JEPHTA. By ERNST LISSAUER. Berlin: Oesterheld. 1929.
PERLENKOMÖDIE. By BRUNO FRANK. Munich: Drei Masken Verlag. 1929.

Reviewed by A. W. G. RANDALL

IN poetry, so we are given to understand, the German Expressionist school has had its day. But this is not altogether true of German drama and the successful production of Herr Wolfenstein's "Die Nacht vor dem Beil" is sufficient to prove that there is still an appreciative public for the kind of play which was almost all-prevailing in Germany in the years immediately following the Armistice. It is, in fact, a thoroughly typical Expressionist drama, comparable with such a play as George Kaiser's "Gas" or "Von Morgens bis Mitternachts." The characters are types and not individuals; the technique is rather like that of the movies, and rapid, staccato speech and action alternate with long rhetorical passages which are more or less sermons on revolution. All this is in the Expressionist tradition. The play essentially is a piece of dramatic propaganda against capital punishment and the capitalist system which the writer mistakenly represents as linked with such a method of punishment. First we are shown the outside of the condemned cell, where the relations of the murdered persons are gathered, all cursing the murderer inside, all blinded—as one might reasonably expect them to be—to what the dramatist appears to regard as the higher realities of the question. These are revealed in the succeeding scene, when we are taken inside the cell to hear the murderer, with passionate incoherence, explaining that he would never have been driven to such a horrible crime if it had not been for the way in which society had treated him. It is a familiar sermon, but its method of presentation, with the relentless clock-face always appearing, is original and striking. The murderer finds sympathy in the son of the judge who had condemned him. This boy throws over his lover and finally rebels against his father and his social class because he has been turned into a revolutionary by his meditation on the condemned man. That is the drama, presented with passionate emphasis and evident sincerity—not the only qualities, unfortunately, required to make a good play.

The various transformation-scenes and the general revolutionary tenor of Herr Csokor's play also follow the Expressionist tradition. But the subject is of greater interest; it deals with the character of the nineteenth century German dramatist, Georg Büchner, whose revolutionary plays, above all his "Danton's Tod," were revived with such success in 1919 and two or three years after. The theme of the play is the thwarting of a sincere revolutionary not so much by outside forces as by an innate weakness of character and indecision of temperament. Those who have read Büchner's work will find this biographical drama of particular interest.

In poetry Richard Billinger, a young Viennese writer, has been thought by some to be the herald of the reaction against Expressionism. Certainly nothing could be more remote from the ordinary Expressionist lyric than his quiet, idyllic poems, and his tone of confident idealism. The "Perchtenspiel" is quite definitely the work of an idealist poet; it is in the same line as Gerhart Hauptmann's "Hannele" or "Versunkene Glocke"; sometimes it reminds us even more forcibly of W. B. Yeats's poetical dramas, such as "The Land of Heart's Desire." It concerns a peasant Peter, in a remote German village, who has left his wife owing to the fascination of the *Perchtin*, one of a race of fairy-like people, some good, some bad, but all capable of bewitching the human race. At the wedding-banquet the Perchtenmutter contrives to make Peter's wife appear, transformed into a creature of beauty, and Peter returns to her, whereupon the fairy-wife takes her revenge by calling on the evil Perchten to burn his house, so that both Peter and his wife perish, and the only survivor is a peasant-girl by whom he has a child. It would seem idle to look for any particular symbolism in this play; its attraction lies in the poetical beauty of its language, much of it in rhyme, and the vigor of the homely village-scenes. The drama was successfully performed at the last Salzburg Festpiele.

Ernst Lissauer is not the first German dramatist to appreciate the value of the Biblical drama as a theme for a modern play. In its original form the story of the father's rash vow and the forced sacrifice of his tenderly-loved child is moving enough and the modern dramatist must justify his adaptation of the plot by a heightened dramatic rendering or a new application. In the latter respect Herr Lissauer seems to us to have been successful. He has brought into greater prominence the character of Leah, Jephta's wife, and in her mouth has put an impassioned defence of the rights of motherhood and innocent childhood against the fierce demands of the state. Such a forcing, for modern purposes, of the ancient tale may be open to blame, but we forget criticism on this score as we follow, with intense emotion, the working-out of the terrible story.

Bruno Frank, whose plays are not unknown to American theatre-goers, has produced a sprightly comedy in the Parisian manner—a rather rare thing in modern German drama. The pearls of the title are a black pearl necklace which Herr Siethoff has given to his wife Vera. She treasures them because they are to her a concrete proof of his constancy and affection after five years of married life. So that a difficult situation is created when Siethoff leaves her one evening, saying he is going to the club, and during his absence a masked, silent stranger enters and presenting a revolver takes from her the pearls and nothing else. Siethoff's comparative lack of concern soon indicates that something is amiss and eventually we learn, in a series of bright and well-constructed scenes, that he had some time before given the real pearls to his lover Cora, and substituted false ones on his wife's necklace. The masked robber, of course, proves to be Peter Mack, who had long worshipped Vera from afar, and, learning of her husband's deception, had adopted this unusual method of declaring his affection and making due restoration to the injured wife. And so the plot is worked out to its un-moral but, one must suppose, happy ending, with a lightness of touch which, as we have said, is often far to seek in German comedy.

Far Eastern Lacquer

LES LAQUES D'EXTRÈME-ORIENT. By MELLE M. J. BALLOT. Paris: Van-oest. 1929.

Reviewed by LANGDON WARNER
Harvard University

THE format of this series particularly lends itself to such handbooks as the one on Far Eastern lacquer with its thirty-two plates and slight but informative text. The author attempts no fresh contribution to the subject, but it is indeed a contribution to assemble, with such good taste, the series of lacquers which are available for study in Paris. The collections of MM. Koechlin and Vever figure almost equally with that of the Louvre, as one would have expected, and indeed their standard is higher. For the thirteenth century sutra box (plate XIV) in the collection of that prince of collectors—M. Koechlin—has no superiors in Europe and all too few among the Imperial Treasures of Japan. But to publish the Louvre box (plate XII), decorated with plums in mother-of-pearl, as a contemporary to that great piece, is immediately to discredit a very fine example of seventeenth-century lacquer. One finds it difficult to give it full credit when found among such superior company.

The text follows Bushell closely without taking advantage of the flood of modern works in Japanese which have appeared on the subject. For this reason perhaps the *Kwanshitsu* technique is not thoroughly understood, and the Fuku Kensaku of the Sangwatsudo is presented as the first example of that technique. In fact, it is probable that some of the companion statues which stand not three yards away from it are in truth a decade or so earlier.

Every one would cheerfully admit (and the author need not protest) that Chinese lacquer technique was probably the ancestor of the Japanese methods. But to be equally fair to the other great nation, we should add that the Chinese never carried it so far.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth parts of Roger Martin du Gard's "Les Thibault" (Nouvelle Revue Française) have recently appeared under the titles "La Consultation," "La Sorellina," and "La Mort du Père" respectively. According to Edmond Jaloux, no part of the whole work that has so far appeared is more successful than "La Consultation" and "La Mort du Père." Here, he says, the principal characters are lifelike and animated, personalities familiar to experience; their habits of life and thought are presented with the greatest accuracy and verisimilitude. Nevertheless, the critic goes on to say, the general impression created by the work so far is of an imposing romance in the French manner rather than of a torrent of truth such as is to be found in the novels of Tolstoy.

Once More PHILOSOPHY* *Tops the List* of Best Sellers!

TRIBUTES from the Nation's Press

Ten Best Sellers
(Compiled for the United Press by the Baker & Taylor Co.)
GENERAL BOOKS
1. The Mansions of Philosophy. By Will Durant. Simon and Schuster. $5.00
2. Henry the Eighth. By Francis Hackett. Horace-Liveright. $3.00.
3. The Art of Thinking. By Ernest Dimnet. Simon and Schuster. $2.50
4. A Preface to Morals. By Walter Lippman. Macmillan. $2.50.
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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, 2 Bramerton Street, Chelsea, S. W., London, England.

M. E. S., Washington, D. C., asks what novel appeared within a year or so, with Cecil Rhodes as its hero, and if there have been any recent biographies of Cecil Rhodes.

THE novel is "Dominion," by John Presland (Stokes); it is based on fact and from it the facts about his career, personal and political, would seem sufficiently melodramatic. The latest biography to appear in the United States is "Cecil Rhodes," by Basil Williams (Holt), a comprehensive study of his life and times. Emil Ludwig's "Genius and Character" (Harcourt, Brace) has a chapter on him. In England "Rhodes: A Life," by J. G. McDonald (P. Allan) was published in 1927, and in the same year reminiscences of "Cecil Rhodes in Peace and War" appeared in the *National Review*. Before that we had "Cecil Rhodes, Man and Empire Maker," by Catherine Radziwill (Funk & Wagnalls), and the two-volume "Life and Times of Cecil Rhodes," by L. L. Mitchell (Argus Press). A booklet on "The Rhodes Memorial at Oxford," by Watts-Dunton, is published by the Oxford University Press.

H. B. M., Cadiz, Ohio, is making a collection of books relating to his county (Harrison), and has already nearly two hundred written by or about its residents. He is interested in Bishop Simpson and John A. Bingham, especially the latter, and asks if he is mentioned in any biography of Andrew Johnson.

IN the admirable "Andrew Johnson: Plebeian and Patriot," by Robert W. Winston (Holt), the first real biography of Lincoln's successor though it is less than a year old, there is an account of the occasion when "perhaps the queerest instance of the intolerance of the Radical with the Conservative was seen when Ben Butler ran afoul of Bingham," and much of the speech of "the great Bingham" at the impeachment trial is given in the account of this event. I have not yet seen the even newer biography, by Lloyd Paul Striker, "Andrew Johnson: A Study in Courage," published by Macmillan late in May, but the quotations in the advance notices look promising. "Abraham Lincoln, had he lived," he says, "would have been crucified by the Radicals in Congress. Andrew Johnson suffered that crucifixion for him."

John A. Bingham does not enter by name into the account of the trial of Mrs. Surratt in Lloyd Lewis's new "Myths after Lincoln" (Harcourt, Brace), but this trial, at which he was the Judge Advocate prosecuting the accused, is described in the detail of which the American reader never tires when those weeks are in question. I find Mr. Lewis's book most difficult to drop, and I tried to do so often enough in the process of packing books for summer storage, during which it arrived. There I had to sit, surrounded by work undone, and take it all in. Besides its remarkable study of the long pageant of Lincoln's funeral train across the country to Springfield, "half circus, half heartbreak," there is a history of the elevation of John Wilkes Booth to what folklore recognizes as a "demon-hero," that shows his legend approached that of the Wandering Jew. It is interesting, by the way, to notice the treatment of J. Wilkes Booth in the biographical novel by Alice Glasgow, "The Twisted Tendril" (Stokes), which follows the course of his life with accuracy.

A quotation from Bishop Simpson's funeral sermon for Lincoln, the final one, at Springfield, is given in "Myths After Lincoln."

D. M. K., University of Virginia, is making a collection of novels in which Dr. Johnson appears as a character; it has stopped short with two entries: "The Virginians" and John Buchan's "Midwinter," but he has heard that within the last few years a novel has appeared with scenes laid in the Hebrides during Johnson's tour in that region.

IT looks to me as if the informant had found the re-issue of Buchan's "Midwinter" (Houghton Mifflin) in the new edition lately from the press, and mistaken it for a first appearance; this novel seems to me to have so noble and sympathetic a treatment of Johnson that I don't see how it could be bettered in fiction, and I am glad it will now have a new audience. Otherwise I know only of two romances by Frankfort Moore, both out of print: "Fanny's First Novel"—of course this is "Evelina"—and "A Nest of Linnets," in which Sheridan's wife appears. There is, of course, the play "Dr. Johnson" (Atlantic Monthly Press) by A. Edward Newton, and a new brief biography has just appeared, "Dr. Johnson," by Christopher Hollis (Holt). Other recent Johnsoniana include "Johnson and Boswell Revised by Themselves and Others," three essays by David N. Smith, R. W. Chapman, and L. L. Powell (Oxford University Press); a charming group of biographical essays, "Dr. Johnson and Company," by Robert Lynd (Doubleday, Doran); "Aspects of Dr. Johnson," by E. S. Roscoe (Macmillan), and a new edition of Boswell's "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson," published by Dutton. A privately printed edition of "The Private Papers of James Boswell" from the material purchased by Col. Ralph Isham from a descendant of Boswell, came from the press of William Edwin Rudge at Christmastime.

G. B., Brooklyn, N. Y., asks for books on the care, training, and education of children no longer babies, but not yet old enough for school.

A BOOK like "Youth in the World of Men" (John Day), by Marietta Johnson of the famous school in Fairhope, Alabama, goes far to convince me that the human race may soon be going ahead at a somewhat swifter rate of speed than that to which history has become accustomed. For each successive generation has hitherto slowed up this rate by insisting that its children should go through the process of repeating all its mistakes before they can be permitted to enjoy even what their parents learned from them. Mrs. Johnson seems not to care what may be accepted practice in child-training, she just goes ahead with sound practice; each of the illustrations from life is of a sort to make one think "this child at least had a fair chance." I can see how a young parent might find a hundred hints here, on education, play, instruction in ethics, and on sex matters, and the sort of discipline that works into self-discipline. All the works of Angelo Patri are of this sort; they accompany a parent through the years of his child's schooling and contain much that will help him get a child ready for these years. Mrs. Johnson's book takes one through the years of an "experimental" school; another new book, "Parents and the Pre-school Child," by William E. Blatz and Helen Bott (Morrow), takes care of the years before the child goes; it just fits the age requirements of this question. Based on case-studies of normal children, it describes these in such detail and with such encouraging reports of successful adjustment of various difficulties, that it looks as if the percentage of unadjusted school children might decrease by its preliminary use at home. No doubt parent-teacher groups are adopting it.

A resolute habit of looking for the best is needed to see much good ahead for children at the hands of a generation that could stage the disgusting farce of the prosecution of Mrs. Dennett, but a book or two like these I have just named may help to cheer a despondent mind. The pre-school child has always a harder time than a baby in a full-grown world; a baby after all stays approximately where it is put, and helplessness is itself a hold on the heart. But a child that can walk is beginning to walk away from its parent, and many a parent's idea is just to smack him and haul him back. I base this opinion on case-study in the public parks of my native city, beside whose benches, in these sunny days of spring, daily conflicts of personality are staged. A parent who does not enjoy such conflicts may forestall some of them by "Parents and the Pre-school Child," which has a foreword by the director of the Child Study Association, and before he is quite through with the subject he may be interested in "Psycho-analysis and Education," by Barbara Low (Harcourt, Brace), a conservative, non-technical account of the light thrown by Freud's researches upon the relations between children and their parents and teachers.

THE Cleveland Public Library sends me a list supplementing the one of novels about the negro in America, lately published in these columns. This one is mimeographed, and I should think that other libraries if they asked for it prettily might get a copy. It includes pre-war and present-day fiction, and puts in even the comic stories we all enjoy without much thought for their documentary values, with an explanatory note for each; there is also a department for novels in which negroes are minor, but not unimportant, characters.

W. B. K., Washington, D. C., sends this report from experience to the enquirer about books on architecture to be used while travelling abroad:

"I FOUND a little book entitled, 'How to Look at Old Churches,' by H. Spencer Stowell, of extreme value in explaining very simply and clearly the differences between the cathedral styles and differentiating features. It greatly increased the interest in looking at the cathedrals and the old parish churches. It is published by Methuen & Co., London.

"In discussing some very interesting features pertaining to the government of the cathedrals, the history of their control, the organization of building, and the cathedral life, I received great benefit from 'The Cathedral Churches of England,' by A. Hamilton Thompson, published by The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. This book has much information that I was not able to find to be given elsewhere."

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Points of View

We Berate Ourselves

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

Inasmuch as my present office of Contributing Editor to *The Saturday Review of Literature* militates against my thorough acquaintance with the reviews chosen or printed therein, I was both surprised and baffled to note in your issue of May 18, 1929, what appears to me an extraordinarily misleading review of the most recent volume of poems of Arthur Davison Ficke, "Mountain against Mountain." This came to my attention too late for my protest to hinder its being printed. For indeed it is criticism in no sense of the word. When one speaks of a writer's "limited and imperfect technique" and of his "weaknesses of style," chapter and verse are demanded if such indictments are to have the slightest cogency. The reviewer in this case goes on, without submitting any evidence at all, to refer to Mr. Ficke's long closing poem, "The Return of Christ," as exhibiting "an absence of all literary and rhetorical distinction," bringing the same charge against the long opening poem, "Paris 1917," and concluding that these qualities "do not compensate for their lack of poetic interest, imaginative beauty, and power." This is so sweeping a charge that it could have no possible validity without the citation of passages designed to prove the reviewer's point, which are not forthcoming. The reviewer then states that Mr. Ficke's poetry does not possess certain qualities he finds in the poetry of Thomas Hardy, Robert Bridges, and Walter de la Mare. His concluding paragraph avers that Mr. Ficke's work "lacks the conscious beauty of a deliberate and distinguished style which alone could endow his emotion, however poignant or profound for himself, with validity for the common reader," an opinion which, in my own view, is utter nonsense. "Style" is of many varieties, in the first place. In the second, I need only quote one single verse from one single brief poem of Mr. Ficke's to reveal "the conscious beauty of a deliberate and distinguished style," viz.:

Where rich the soil lies waiting,
Men plant the harvest there;
But the free lark sows music
On the unfruitful air.

It is not merely my own opinion that Arthur Davison Ficke is one of the most distinguished of contemporary moulders of the sonnet and a lyrist often of unusual beauty and power. He has been acclaimed by abler pens than my own. And a poet of his distinction in twentieth-century American poetry deserved, at the very least, a signed review by a seasoned critic, who would not merely indulge in a sweeping gesture of dismissal without advancing any proof of what is asserted. In "Mountain against Mountain" there is undeniably poetic interest and imaginative beauty. There is the vitality of actual experience vividly presented in "Paris 1917," that Paris where, in Ficke's own words

. . . are dim mists over the world to-night.
Nothing is certain; nothing is clear; the stars
Flicker in vagueness. In the dark streets
Among the passing strangers, the Enigma
Leers and laughs and wrings its bony hands.

There is a remarkable conception of Christ and impressive narrative in "The Return of Christ." Throughout the whole book there is a simplicity and sincerity of statement that I, for one, often find most moving. I then return to the phrases of the reviewer's extraordinary *ex cathedra* dismissal of this work. They are damaging testimony to his own "limited and imperfect" critical powers. He is quite misled, also, in advancing the shallow dictum that "unrhymed measures expose more ruthlessly a poet's weaknesses of style than do the tighter and more safe and binding forms of rhymed verse." Rhymed verse is neither "safe" nor is it "binding." It is possible for the truly gifted poet to achieve any effect he desires in rhymed verse. I have known in many instances rhyme and metre to expose a poet's weaknesses quite as ruthlessly as either blank verse or free.

All that the reviewer has to say about Mr. Ficke's work actually boils down to the fact that the reviewer does not like it at all. He is entitled to his personal opinion. Mr. Ficke may be content with the opinions of his compeers in the poetry of the time. But again may I submit that such reviewing is in no sense criticism? I should advise the average reader to contrast the reviewer's unsupported assertions with an unbiased reading of "Mountain against Mountain." There we may safely rest the case.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

New York City.

St. Theresa

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

Judging from the letters I have received concerning my article, "Colossal Substance" in *The Saturday Review of Literature* for March 16th, there seems to be some confusion about one phrase.

Obscurity is the last thing intended—"the one woman's saintly and indubitable voice" evoked by the medieval world is (I thought obviously) Saint Theresa.

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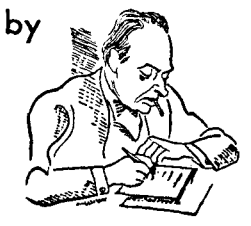

by M. Constantin-Weyer

A Man Scans His Past

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Dear Sir:

I see your department, "The Compleat Collector," every week in the *Saturday Review*. But to be perfectly frank about it, I never have read it because I have never been interested in rare books or first editions.

A number of months ago I bought a set of "——— ———," sold under the auspices of the ——— ———. The publisher's name as it appears on the title page is "——— ———," but I don't know who they are and no address is given—not even a city.

I bought what I am told is one of the first five hundred sets and a fellow told me the other day that practically all these five hundred were sold in New York and Chicago and that they are now bringing or soon will bring a rather fancy price.

I think this chap had something up his sleeve, but if his dope is on the level I'd like to know about it. I hope I'm not imposing when I ask you how I shall go about it to find out the truth.

Stamped envelope enclosed.

Yours very truly,

———— ————.

Dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 8th, asking me if I could inform you of the present or presumptive value of a set of books called "——— ———," published for the ——— ——— by the ——— ———. You have said very frankly that you have read nothing about books and book collecting, and therefore you are in doubt about the books which you have. Your letter is at least frank, and it suggests an equally frank reply.

In the first place, may I say that I have made diligent inquiry, and I cannot learn anything at all about the set of books to which you refer? There appears to be no record of any such publication, nor do I find any clue to the "——— ———" whose name you say is on the title-page as presumable publishers. This does not, of course, mean that no such book has been published, because there are in the course of the year some obscure publications which do not get listed: the name is obviously either fictitious or assumed for commercial purposes.

But it is apparent that you have been the victim of a sort of semi-fraudulent enterprise which annually takes a considerable toll from Americans. Recently there has been put forth a series of books sponsored by a national organization which resembles your "pig in poke." It is a compilation of historical data crudely edited and arranged. But it has been gotten up with all the adventitious aids which its promoters well knew would appeal to those who do not know books, and, not knowing, will yield to the blandishments of the solicitor and pay many dollars for bedizened title-pages, meaningless "limited edition" notices, and gaudily decorated "dedications." The sale of this particular set was achieved by means of seductive suggestions as to the use to which the money received was to be put: quite legitimate use, it may be said, but the bait of the set was unnecessary to achieve the result, and undoubtedly the cost of printing and distributing them took a high toll of the receipts.

How to put on their guard such "tenderfeet" as you in the book collecting game is the question which seems to me needs answering. You have frankly said that you do not read one of the sources of information on such matters. Those of us who write about books sometimes err in judgment: we cannot be omniscient in knowledge: and only infrequently is it possible to say definitely that such and such a book is unworthy. The best we can do from week to week is to call attention to such books as seem to us really worth while. But there are many books which we never see, some, as in the case of the set which you have purchased, which we neither hear of nor can learn about. It is possible, however, to give a little general advice.

At the risk of bringing down on my head the wrath of a large and vigorous fraternity, I say that in general all books and sets of books which are distributed by means of solicitors are to be distrusted. Some subscription books are worth while—I should not want to say that all are inferior. Yet the percentage of inferior ones is very large. In the first place, such books are seldom edited by responsible scholars or writers. Frequently those who have written or compiled them are known only to Grub Street. A scholar of any standing does not need to have his wares peddled from door to door.

The cost of distribution of such books is usually much higher than when the books are circulated in the usual way, by direct advertising or through the book-stores. Book canvassers get a very large commission: the firms issuing such books are under very heavy expenses, and the books are almost invariably overpriced, quality considered.

If you will make comparison between subscription books and books issued in the usual way, you will discover that in most cases the subscription books, since their appeal is to the non-bookish, are rather more commercial adventures than legitimate book publishing. Whenever you see a salesman unfold an accordon-like arrangement of sample pages and specimens of bindings: whenever it is promised you that your name will be printed as one of the "original subscribers": whenever there is, preceding the title-page, an elaborate statement with high-sounding verbiage printed in all colors of the rainbow including gold: whenever the canvasser appeals to your patriotism, your paternal affection, your position in the community, your well-known interest in education, your love of reading: whenever you are asked to peruse the list of well-known and solid citizens who have already signed on the dotted line; BEWARE. These are the devices of commercial exploitation: these are the wiles of the book agent. They have nothing to do with fine books, or good books, or worth-while books.

And lastly, this seductive lure of increase in value. There are books which will increase in value. Intelligently undertaken as an investment business, book buying is a safe and profitable undertaking—only it is then a business and has nothing to do with the love of books. But there are just as many lambs being shorn in that game as in Wall Street, and the prettiest of the lambs, the sweetest and most innocent, are those who buy sets of books hawked about by canvassers.

Will your set increase in value? Bless you, no. I don't know what you paid, but my guess is that if you can get five dollars for the set you will be in luck. R.

The Wits' Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

Competition No. 63. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the best Lines (not exceeding thirty) to a Neglected Poet. Living men or women are not admissible, and the chosen poet should be named. (Entries should reach the *Saturday Review* office, 25 West 45th Street, New York City, not later than the morning of July 15.)

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AUCTION SALES CALENDAR

Sotheby & Company. July 4 and 5. The Library formed by the late James Mann, Esq., of Castlecraig, Pebbleshire. The chief feature of this sale appears to be the practically complete series of publications of the Kelmscott Press, including one of the thirteen copies on vellum of Chaucer's "Works" (1896), bound by Cobden-Sanderson at the Doves Bindery in specially designed white pig-skin, which must, of course, make the whole entirely useless except as an exhibition piece. The other, less sensational items include "a few medieval manuscripts, chiefly Italian fourteenth century"; the earliest issue of Archbishop Laud's Service Boom, the Book of Common Prayer for the use of the Church of Scotland, 1637; Boswell's "Life of Johnson," 1791; the Huth copy of Burns's "Poems," Kilmarnock, 1786, measuring 8¼ in. by 5 in., the first Edinburgh (in the original boards) and first Dublin editions of the same, both 1787; the Doves Press Bible (1903-1905) and "Paradise Lost" (1902); William Morris's copy of Dürer's "Epitome in Divæ Parthenices Mariæ Historiam," 1511; three original water-color drawings by Kate Greenaway; several volumes of no particular interest bound by Cobden-Sanderson at the Doves Bindery; Scott's "Guy Mannering," 1915; "Ivanhoe," 1820; "Kenilworth," 1821, and a few of the other novels, all uncut copies in the original boards; Thackeray's "Vanity Fair," "Pendennis," and "The Newcomes" in the original parts; and a large collection of books relating to painting, engraving, and the fine arts in general. G. M. T.

Students of Mexican history will find in Luis Araquistan's "La Revolución Mejicana" (Madrid: Biblioteca del Hombre Moderno) a keen and analytical discussion of events, spiced with vivid pen portraits of personalities. Signor Araquistan is an enthusiastic believer in the Mexican Revolution and presents a roseate view of affairs.

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A Sunday-school teacher at fourteen, a licensed preacher at seventeen, eleven years a Baptist minister, and eleven more a Unitarian, CHARLES FRANCIS POTTER attained national renown as the opponent of JOHN ROACH STRATON in a series of Carnegie Hall debates on Fundamentalism. He was also Bible expert and librarian for the defense in the Scopes Evolution trial in Dayton, Tennessee.

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The Art of Thinking sold 2,851 copies last week . . . more than ten thousand readers have already paid $5.00 each for *The Mansions of Philosophy* without raising the cry of rent profiteering. . . . A leading bookseller attending his 15th reunion at Amherst distributed twenty-five copies of FRANZ WERFEL'S new book, *Class Reunion*. . . .

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The Observator in *The London Observer* furnishes us the following interesting paragraph:

Mr. Charles S. Bayne ("The Call of the Birds") is the latest to try his hand at translating the songs of birds, and this is what he makes of the thrush:

I *see* you, I *see* you, I *see* you, I *see* you. (Pause)
I do, I do, I do. (Pause)
Will you do it, will you do it? (Pause)
Too, too, too, too, too, too. (Pause)
For me, for me, for me. (Pause)
Don't say no, *don't* say no, *don't* say no.

That is probably as good a version as any, though it seems as vain a pastime as translating the C minor Symphony into speech. One of the good points about the cuckoo is that you cannot possibly put him into more English than he is.

If you go to Capri, according to *Colonel Fitzhugh Lee Minnegerode*, you should arm yourself with a letter of introduction to *Edwin Cerio*. He is himself. He is not *Norman Douglas*. *Julian Street* is also acquainted with him and knows him as the son of the Mayor of Capri. . . .

Katherine Metcalf Roof tells us that her latest book is "Colonel William Smith and Lady" (Houghton Mifflin). They are thus set down in *George Washington's* diary as dinner guests in the days of the first Presidency. There is a portrait of *Colonel William Smith* in *Trumbull's* painting of the Battle of Trenton. An aide to General Washington, he was one of the most gallant officers of the Revolution. "The American Beauty," viz.: *Abigail Adams*, was his wife. . . .

Rockwell Kent has sailed for Greenland (wish we were there, this hot weather!), and beside rations of food and water, the equipment necessary for such a cruise, and his sketching paraphernalia, he took thirty-six Modern Library books. And no others. As Mr. Kent chose, among others, *Voltaire's* "Candide," we hope it won't be banned in Greenland, as it was in Boston. . . .

The Viking Press, together with *Gardner Jackson* and *Mrs. Marion Denman Frankfurter*, editors of "The Letters of *Sacco* and *Vanzetti*," have instituted suit against the *New York Herald* Co. (Paris) and the New *York Tribune*, charging libel in an editorial in a recent Paris edition of the *New York Herald*, in that it was intimated that the letters in the book were dressed up or forged for profit. As a matter of fact, the editors who prepared the material for the press derive no pecuniary benefit from the publication. . . .

The Viking Press can almost claim, also, that they won the recent General Elections in England, inasmuch as the following of their authors are all members of the new Labor Government: *Ramsay MacDonald*, *Margaret Bondfield*, *A. Susan Lawrence*, and *Mrs. Sidney Webb* (though Sidney instead of Mrs. Sidney was elected), *Arthur Henderson*, and *George Lansbury*. . . .

Lincoln MacVeagh of The Dial Press writes us:

> You say you can't see the force of the line "I studied Maupassant" in the "Little Cæsar" ad., but it put "Little Cæsar" at the top of your column, which has always reminded me of the sign hung out by a certain country club in Westchester—"Exclusive but accessible." I am delighted!

Darn it, you can't down those publishers! . . .

Stokes has offered fifty book prizes this summer, through its Library Department, for the best Card Catalogue of Home or Personal Libraries made by boys or girls under sixteen and submitted through the librarian of any School or Public Library. Well, we never kept a card catalogue of our books, but we can recall every once in a while being bitten with the idea of cataloguing our own collection, when we were about ten. We did it all in long-hand till we got tired of it. We used, also, occasionally to get a burst of writing down opinions of books we had recently read, and to look over them to-day is to realize how our taste has changed, for better or for worse. *Thomas Dixon, Jr.*, and *Reginald Wright Kauffmann* may care to know that once "The Leopard's Spots" and "Jarvis of Harvard" seemed to us perfect whales. And of course we regarded Jarvis as the *ne plus ultra* of wicked sophistication! . . .

Hal Smith, of Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith (and somehow it really ought to be Jonathan Smith, because then we could say he was descended from Captain John Smith, and maybe from Noah an' Jonah, too,—) well, Hal Smith is seeing how *Helen Grace Carlisle's* "See How They Run," is running. He says its advance sale has been remarkable for a first novel. . . .

Our little friend *Sylvia Satan* of Newark, N. J., contributes the following:

MIGRATION

We sat beside the snapping driftwood fire
Holding the scarlet tanagers, found cold,
Beaten to lifelessness by buffeting wind.
Wet ruffled plumage, by the light-house base,
Scattered its ruby; startled flamelike wings
Drenched in the brutal bludgeonings of the storm.
One woman brought a tiny red-winged corpse
Flung on the path-stones leading to the gate,
A clot of carmine by the lilac bush.
A child brought in three birds with cardinal throats
Stifled with wet sand from surf-rioting shore.
We knew that last night's storm had been so wild
That birds migrating, driven off their course,
Had wound the hollow ball of sea and gale
Until their red skein broke in scattered knots,
Their radiant flocking vividness flung down
A scarlet strand torn from the pattern of Spring.
We sat there, stricken, hearing the tiny cries,
Bewildered signalling, despair of males
To mates far back in valleys of the night
Sucked down in whirlpools of the hurricane . . .
Until the little host of flashing wings
Trailing like blood along the pitiless path
Became our own hearts driving on the dark.

The July issue of *The Theatre Arts Monthly* is devoted to The Tributary Theatre. Among others it shows scenes from the Wellesley Try-Out Theatre and Irvine Players, the Dartmouth Theatre and the Stanford University Players, the St. Paul Players, the Carolina Playmakers, the Goodman Memorial Theatre, Chicago, the Dallas Little Theatre, the Montana Masquers, the Cornell Dramatic Club, the University of Oregon Guild Players, the Tsukiji-Sho-Gekijyo of Tokyo, and so on. It is a lesson to us as to how many tributary theatres there are in this country, to say nothing of the Japanese one. . . .

The first novel, so far as we know, of *Guglielmo Ferrero*, the famous Roman historian, presents Rome three decades ago. The title of the book is "The Seven Vices," a name applied to the hero of the book and his friends. Here is an old aristocracy fighting against the newly risen newly rich. The work is a large one, in two volumes at five dollars. It is published by Harcourt, Brace and the translation has been made by *Elizabeth Abbott*. . . .

T. Spencer Hutson of New York is the publisher of "American Etchers" of which the first two volumes, one on *Ernest D. Roth* and one on *Alfred Hutty*, are now ready, and others in preparation. The books are compiled by the Crafton Collection. The introduction to the Roth reproductions is by *Elizabeth Whitmore*, that to the Hutty by *Duncan Phillips*. They are beautiful volumes. Hutty's trees, for one thing, are quite marvelous. And the only exception we take to Mr. Phillips's remarks about him is his reference to Hutty's friend *Dubose Heyward* as "Dubose Heywood." . , .

And so to the boat-races.

THE PHOENICIAN.

The New Books

Philosophy

(*Continued from page 1147*)

THE PROCESS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR. By MANDEL SHERMAN and IRENE CASE SHERMAN. Norton. 1929.

This is not a very juicy but it is a nutritious book. It describes in intelligent terms the early stages of the budding intelligence. It falls into two divisions, which may reflect the foci of interests of the two collaborators. The one is the objective response to the stimulations of things, the other the emotional reactions affecting subjective welfare. The infant as a bundle of reflexes has become a laboratory reagent, yet assumes so rapidly its human status, outdistancing in complication its simpler vertebrate analogues, that the stages must be measured in days, even in hours. The infant is protected from overstimulation by a high threshold of resistance, which probably has its seat in the synapses, or dovetailed brushlike fibre endings in the neuron path. With ease of discharge at that point habit is formed, and there is established the path of least resistance.

Among the points of special interest in the infant's career are these: the early index of intelligence is sensory alertness and motor control; differentiation begins early, very early, even infants show their types; though early conditioning accounts for much, it is later stimulation that accounts for more; there is less difference in infant response among the socially poor and the comfortably situated classes than in the parallel responses a few years later; mental retardation may be detected in the early months, almost in the early weeks; the infant is the father of the child.

In the second realm of early human behavior, the emotions rule. The camera-studies show the vagueness of the early registration, contrasted only in the pain and pleasure field; adequacy comes on more slowly than in the simpler reflexes, and presently the technique shifts to the control through habit and an increasing element of reflection. On the whole, emotional and intellectual progress as well as initial superiority all go together; certainly defect shows as retardation in all fields. The brighter children walk and talk and smile and respond to delicate varieties of situations, show a richer emotional repertory, than the duller; they start earlier and go faster, promising a higher attainment.

This contribution to the process of human behavior will find its place among the useful source-book of information on the shelves of students, including parents, of children.

Poetry

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF A. E. COPPARD. Knopf. 1929.

Mr. Coppard's charming and rather disarming verses embarrass the critic. In spite of admirable passages, in spite of a pervading pleasantness of phrase, they do not carry full conviction. Perhaps the reason is that on the whole Mr. Coppard fails to achieve a poetic style of his own. His verse, however exquisite, seems to reveal the half-obliterated hallmarks of other craftsmen. There is an uncomfortable reminiscence here of Mr. A. E. Housman—there of Mr. Walter de la Mare. One hesitates to say this after Mr. Coppard's own rather truculent protest in his prefatory "Advertisement" that he has never "felt the desire to copy anyone." He maintains that he is himself "quite a good judge of poetry." Quite so. Those who have influenced, or as one should perhaps say, those who seem to have influenced, Mr. Coppard are admirable poets. The prefatory remarks are distinctly unfortunate. The poems themselves are often very lovely. Perhaps Mr. Coppard's free verse is the best—at least it seems more his own. "The Oracle," for example, is a poem of exquisite precision and mood. There is a quality of ancientness about its homely beauty. For quotation we select the poem which perhaps pleased us most—"Winter Field"—

Sorrow on the acres,
Wind in the thorn,
And an old man ploughing
Through the frosty morn.

A flock of the dark birds,
Rooks and their wives,
Follow the plough team
The old man drives;

And troops of starlings
A-tittle-tat and prim,
Follow the rocks
That follow him.

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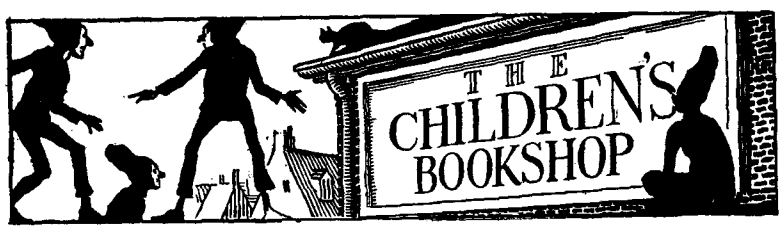

Conducted by MARION PONSONBY

The Awkward Age*

By HELEN CHRYSTIE

GIRLS' books of today, full of outdoor adventure, are probably an advance over such works as the old "Elsie" books, for instance. But what a feeble advance it seems when we count the quantity of artificial mystery-plots, forced enthusiasms, unreal characters presented as real ones, bad printing, ugly illustrations, and muddy writing ravaging this sick member of juvenile literature. The disease seems contagious for most of the books at hand show similar symptoms. But that it is not inevitable is proven by "The Beckoning Road."

Young minds are peculiarly responsive to enthusiasm. Theirs is a straight line enthusiasm, unbroken by psychological quavers, but heading straight into reality which will one day break or bend or fork or redirect it. Every juvenile we read seems to attempt to make contact with this essentially young spirit, but artificality of method often cripples a good idea and a good will. The writer's enthusiasm is superimposed instead of integral. Witness the stories in which we can hear the author saying, "Now, girls, let's get excited." The result is sterile because there are no real people—no people of every minute significance—just X the sharp witted heroine, Y the mysterious Chinaman, etc. These people do not matter after their names are mentioned in the first chapter. Only events remain and, however interesting when, as in many of these books, they entail description of interesting places, events, alone cannot give life. Mystery plots, boarding school settings, heroines brought up by a guardian or a widowed father are not positive faults but they are negative virtues and even handicaps, tempting tricks to make the absence of personality less apparent to the casual reader but no less stultifying to the book.

The first nine books listed below, like their adolescent readers, seem to be at the awkward age. They are suffering from something like growing pains, but, unlike their readers, they can avoid the complaint. "The Poindexter Pride," "Ginger and Speed," and "The Jade Necklace" would have been all right if left alone. Their characters are well on the way to being alive when the voice of personality is drowned out by noisy excitement created in deference to conventions of "mystery *über alles*" and "fool proof happy endings." Often spirit and personality would be a part of these books but are not because of bad writing. In "The Mystery of the Marsh" long, feebly conceived sentences spoil an almost good book. The author of "The New Curiosity Shop," in a noble attempt to convey some subtlety of idea, occasionally makes the conversation of her heroine unnatural. The bad writing of "Midge" seems intentional—"Midge" and "Glo" and "I" did this and nearly died over that. It calls for a counter-statement that children will react pleasantly to enjoyable English even before they consciously try to use it.

Though they fall within the formula as to plot and personalities, two of these books offer undeniably redeeming attractions. Charm of illustration, printing, and the Maine country described distinguish "The Haunted Ship." "The Trail of the Comet" is well written and with so light a touch that, attempting only momentary pleasantness, it achieves at least that.

In spite of occasional attractions, however, these nine books demonstrate the prevalent trouble with girls' book. "The Beckoning Road" demonstrates the trouble avoided. It is successfully adjusted to the requirements of a young mind. It meets youthful enthusiasm by portraying the spirit of the people who pioneered with Robert Dale Owen in the communistic colony called New Harmony. It is alive with real people—grown ups as well as children. After all the constant attempt to understand their elders is a natural pursuit of young people in life and one of their needs in literature. It does not circumvent reality; it runs straight into it. The colony fails; the Quaker common sense and self-control of the mother is a great help to her daughter but at the same time a wall against their intimacy. There are ideas, ideas that grow out of the portrayal of grown-up characters, not artificially written into the conversation of a child. Much of the thought in such an excellent book for young people is beyond their power of expression but the reading of it is an enlarging experience which makes the book important to them. This is a beautiful book to look at too, and thoroughly heartening for the case of juveniles; already reviewed in this "Bookshop," it now reappears because of its significance.

*THE POINDEXTER PRIDE. By GLADYS BLAKE. New York: Appleton & Co. 1929. $1.75.
OUT OF THE STORM. By MARCIA MACDONALD. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1929. $1.75.
THE JADE NECKLACE. By PEMBERTON GINTHER. Philadelphia: Macrae Smith. 1929. $1.75.
GINGER AND SPEED. By ETHEL HUESTON. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1929. $2.
THE NEW CURIOSITY SHOP. By HARRIETTE R. CAMPBELL. New York: Harper & Bros. 1929. $1.75.
THE TRAIL OF THE COMET. By GLADYS ALLEN. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1929. $1.75 net.
MIDGE. By MARY FRANCIS SHUFORD. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1929. $1.75.
THE MYSTERY OF THE MARSH. By DORIS POCOCK. The same.
THE HAUNTED SHIP. By KATE TUCKER. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1929. $1.75.
THE BECKONING ROAD. By CAROLINE DALE SNEDEKER. New York: Doubleday, Doran. 1929. $2.

WHERE IT ALL COMES TRUE IN SCANDINAVIA. By CLARA E. LAUGHLIN. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1929. $2.50.

Reviewed by LUCY BARTLETT

UNLESS you have been to the Scandinavian countries, or have heard usually sober-worded friends suddenly turn rhapsodical after a trip to the North Cape, you will be tempted to say that Miss Laughlin, always somewhat of an enthusiast in her approvals, has this time let her enthusiasm carry her too far, even though you realize that she is trying to express adolescent emotion. Adjectives, exclamation points, and italics follow one another in thick succession down her pages, and you feel a little breathless; you wonder if even youthful nieces and nephews, for whom this book is written, will not feel a little breathless, too.

But before you have read very far you realize that the reiteration of the emphatic is having its desired effect. Even the older, less impressionable reader—and we predict that there will be many older readers along with the young—becomes aware that these are remarkable countries, beautiful countries, intensely interesting countries—in fact, one finds oneself using adjectives and exclamations in somewhat the author's own fashion!

In this book, and in its companion book also recently brought out, "Where It All Comes True in Italy and Switzerland," Miss Laughlin has changed the letter though not entirely the spirit of her successful "So You're Going to . . ." series of guide-books. Here she has adopted the plan of telling the story of her travels through Denmark, Sweden, and Norway with her two nieces, and of telling it as they would presumably tell it, in their own words and from their viewpoint. This is no new idea, of course, but Miss Laughlin has succeeded in making something new out of it, for the book is more than the story of their travels. It is a competent guidebook also, with a good bit of history and biography in addition. Indeed she tells so many delightful things to do and places to see that anyone booked for a mere six-weeks' cruise is tempted to cancel the bookings at once in favor of nothing less than three months. Tactfully but definitely the author makes it plain that she has not much opinion of these hit-and-run tours when it comes to visiting such rich treasures of history, art, and beauty as are found in the Scandinavian countries.

It is a pity that in the midst of so much excellence the author has twice lost sight both of good taste and of good judgment. The first is the account of the interview with Selma Lagerlöf; the second, the paragraph with reference to the United States Minister to Norway. Neither of these passages adds to Miss Laughlin's stature, and it is to be hoped that she will omit them from any further editions.

One might also question the value of the occasional lapses into moral sententiousness—as in the final paragraphs of the brief statement about the Nobel prizes. In place of these we wish she would put in some indication of how to pronounce those strange and difficult-looking Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian names!

Books like this should be used in schools. To be specific, this book might well be used in place of many of the histories and geographies now so openly yawned over. For it has the great merit of making one want to know much more than it tells about these countries and their ancient and glamorous history. And any other Aunt Claras who may be planning to take other Bettys and Marys on such a trip, with this book as their guide, would do well to provide themselves with volumes of history and mythology, and so be ready for the questions which will surely come.

WHERE IT ALL COMES TRUE IN ITALY AND SWITZERLAND. By CLARA E. LAUGHLIN. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1928. $2.

Reviewed by MARION C. DODD

SOME of us who have traveled abroad successfully with children feel a special interest in the methods necessary to make that experience a satisfying and happy one for all concerned. It is good to find an exposition in book form of just these wiser principles of handling a children's foreign tour. We do not refer to little children; for them traveling for the sake of traveling will hardly be considered. Family exigencies will sometimes set them upon the road, and then the best must be made of it. But let some one else, some day, suggest how to work out that "best"!

Here we are concerned with children from perhaps ten on, who have reached an age where physical needs are more easily met under varying circumstances, and where imminent mental awakening is both stimulated and satisfied by the picture-book experience of foreign travel. But certain elements which grown-ups do not need to consider must be added to the traveling program,—such as exercise and free play, to mention one item only; and certain other elements must be quite definitely eliminated. If this re-arrangement results in sacrifices for the grown-ups, compensation will be furnished by the interest and entertainment that will be found in the responsive point of view of the younger travelers, the new angles they lend to every approach.

Miss Laughlin in her book "Where It All Comes True" has not written out her theories, but the book is clearly their expression in graphic form. The style chosen by the author seems to us slightly questionable. Her nieces, the two little travelers, are supposedly the authors, writing in the first person. Since this is not the case, a slight sense of artificiality and of confused values is produced, especially sometimes where phrases and words too childish for the appropriate age are used. But this artificiality will probably not be felt by the younger readers for whom the book is intended, the method will be for them successfully achieved in an animated and graphic quality at once enlisting their interest. The author certainly has been successful in observing and feeling through her nieces' eyes and imaginations.

The material of the book is everywhere excellent. Italy and Switzerland form the background, and description is centered on the interesting geographical features and more especially on historical associations. The latter, again, are presented with lively narrative, telling just the things children would want to know, in just the way they would want to hear them told.

A large part of the usual guide-book accompaniment to each place, indispensable to the adult traveler, will be found to be lacking, and quite rightly so. This book understands its purpose and makes no mistake of trying to fill all needs and thereby confusing the issue. We praise and recommend it heartily. The sprightly illustrations, also, are in just the right tone,—not a photographic but an imaginative accompaniment.

Suggestion for parents taking their youngsters along on the European trip. At the nearest bookshop look into the following new travel-juveniles: "Hobnails and Heather," by Clifton Lisle (Harcourt). "Where It All Comes True," by Clara Laughlin (Houghton). "Storybook Europe," by Anne Merriman Peck (Harper). "Timothy Travels," by Daisy Neuman (Coward-McCann).

PRINCE BANTAM. By LYND WARD and MAY MCNEER. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1929. $2.50.

NANETTE OF THE WOODEN SHOES. By ESTHER BRAUN. The same. $2.

Reviewed by CHRISTINA H. BAKER

IT is interesting to review these books together, for in spite of differing material and style they share the same purpose and the same problem. Both try to increase a child's knowledge of other lands and to stimulate imagination. Each must surmount the hurdle raised by the child's shrinking from unfamiliarity. "Tell it again"; "tell me about a little boy (or girl) like me"—that is what the little child wants. Each of these books meets this hurdle in a different way.

"Prince Bantam" gives a child Japanese folk-lore in an adventurous, rapidly-moving story. The basis of the legend is the same as that wherever a child is born into an adult world. The hero is young and small; he always wins over incredible odds; the giant follows obediently at his heels. But the nomenclature and the customs are bewilderingly strange, and into this barrier of unfamiliarity the enthusiastic and well-informed authors simply crash. A further difficulty is that the excellently illustrated book is too large and too heavy for childish hands.

"Nanette of the Wooden Shoes" is a gentle story of Breton fisher-folk, told with charm and simplicity, and pleasingly illustrated. The author has met the hurdle by lowering it almost out of sight. Nanette and Jean-Pierre are little Americans in sabots. There is, therefore, no such appeal to the imagination as in "Prince Bantam." On the other hand, children will sit down and read this book to themselves.

What is the secret of that technique by which the authors of "Heidi" and "Hans Brinker" have led generations of children into strange lands with the hurdle of unfamiliarity not a barrier but an imaginative asset?

WITH THE EAGLES. By PAUL L. ANDERSON. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1929. $1.75.

Reviewed by CATHERINE WOODBRIDGE

THIS is a book for the difficult age, when a boy is beginning to feel his years and is afraid of being literary. It is such a good yarn that he will read it eagerly without realizing that he is getting a large dose of Cæsar's "Gallic War." Here instead of an impersonal account of group movements, is the story of Cæsar's conquest of Gaul in terms of personality. Thus, while limited in scope, it gains in concreteness. Linguistic difficulties obscure the original narrative for most boys, but here they will find the figures of Cæsar and his generals and all the fascinating mechanism of the Roman army gaining reality through the eyes of a young legionary.

Mandorix is a Gaul, but one of the friendly, half-Romanized Æduans. In his later years, after he has become a Roman citizen, he tells the story of his joining Cæsar's army and of his adventures during the operations against the unfriendly tribes. It is a stirring account. The various combats, both single-handed and of armed forces, are tersely told, stage by stage, without any flourishes of style. The meticulous accuracy of the detail gives the scenes a photographic vividness. In the account of the destruction of the Roman legion by Ambiorix, the author manages to convey a sense of frightful confusion and yet keep the progress of the battle clear. The siege-operations of the Nervii are equally well told and there is an excellent description of a Roman camp with a diagram as well. Sometimes the exact reconstruction is carried too far. The slightly suggestive end of a spirited marching song seems uncalled for. The story is virile enough without it and smacks convincingly of soldiery, and of Roman soldiery in particular. It is permeated with that most Roman sense of loyalty to one's country and one's leader, and of duty done in the face of all odds. The style itself is kept in good classical tradition. The description of Cæsar might come out of Plutarch. The choice of incidents has a dramatic aptness which makes them memorable. The book will, we think, give children some idea of the qualities at the root of Rome's greatness. It will leave with them an impression of unconquerable tenacity.

One who at an advanced age is attempting to recall her childish enthusiasms wishes that she had kept a record of the "book of the year" selected according to her personal preference each year of her reading or being-read-to life.

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Jo van Ammers-Kuller

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